DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 819 FL 021 353

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TITLE Interpreting Translating and Language Policy. Report to the Language and Society Centre, National Languages Institute of Australia. NLIA Occasional Paper No. 3.
INSTITUTION Australian National Languages Inst., Melbourne.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-875578-00-5
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 139p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Policy; Foreign Countries; Language Planning; Language Role; Opinion Papers; Policy Formation; *Public Policy; *Translation
IDENTIFIERS *Australia (Victoria)

ABSTRACT

This research report is intended to provide the National Languages Institute of Australia (NLIA) with an overview of the issues demanding attention in the fields of interpreting and translating. While interpreting and translating have received attention in major language policy reports, subsequent language policy implementation has rarely encompassed these issues. This report argues that the NLIA could have a significant policy and practical role in evaluating present needs related to interpreting and translating and addressing problems in the field. The project described reviews major policy documents on language service organization and review; outlines institutional development in the interpreting and translating field in terms of language services, courses, professional issues, and the private market; and identifies some major policy issues. Recommendations to the NLIA based on these analyses are included. The paper is organized into several topics: interpreting and translating in the context of the NLIA and the National Policy on Languages; the history and current status of interpreting and translating in Australia; and relevant policy issues. Appended items describe persons consulted for the report, a telephone interpreter service, and a interpreting/translating and language aide course accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. (Contains 58 references.) (JP)

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INTERPRETING TRANSLATING AND LANGUAGE POLICY

ULDIS OZOLINS

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INTERPRETING TRANSLATING AND LANGUAGE POLICY

REPORT TO THE
LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY CENTRE
NATIONAL LANGUAGES INSTITUTE
OF AUSTRALIA

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PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

NATIONAL LANGUAGES INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA
MELBOURNE
1991

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NLIA Ocassional Paper Nº 3

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ISBN 1 875578 00 5

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Joseph lo Bianco

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PREFACE

The fourth principle of the National Policy on Languages addresses the question of the equitable and widespread provision of language services. *Language services* is a term which embraces aspects of language planning in Australia which are not encompassed under *education*. Interpreting and translating services are the most obvious, but not the only, language service.

The National Languages Institute of Austalia has been entrusted in the charter issued by the federal government with the responsibility of taking forward the National Policy on Languages and, accordingly, we need to address systematically all aspects of interpreting and translating. Among the many aspects of interpreting and translating which warrant attention are:

- meeting the needs of the community who require interpreting and translating – some immigrants from non-English speaking background, some Australian Aborigines, some deaf people;
- meeting the needs of the profession – upgrading its status in the community, assisting the further professionalization of the field, attending to expansion and improvement in the quallity of training;
- meeting the needs of the nation – assisting Australia's trading and tourism efforts by making available specialized and/or general interpreting and translating services which are appropriate to the countries economic needs, assisting people to participate more fully in Australia society by giving them access to information and services.

For these important reasons, the National Languages Institute, through its Language and Society Centre at Monash University has produced this report on interpreting and translating. Dr Uldis Ozolins has done a fine job in analyzing the history and development of interpreting and translating in Australia and is proposing a series of concrete measures which the Institute will be able to take forward, in co-operation with bodies such as NAATI, AUSIT, the Language Services Bureau and others.

JOSEPH LO BIANCO
Director
National Languages
Institute of Australia

Introduction

This brief research report is intended to give the National Languages Institute of Australia (NLIA) an overview of the issues demanding attention in the field of interpreting/translating.

Given the substantial initiatives in language policy taken over the last decade, it must be noted that while some attention has always been paid to interpreting/translating (henceforth I/T) in major language policy reports, subsequent language policy implementation has rarely encompassed I/T. Thus, I/T is not included in any of the programs funded under the National Policy on Languages, has no clear place in the programs of any of the centres of the NLIA, was explicitly excluded from the DEET review of language and literacy programs (DEET 1990), and altogether looks like one of the areas of language policy which has gained least from recent developments.

It will be the argument of this report that such exclusion is not an oversight. It clearly reflects on the one hand problems within I/T itself, particularly historical problems of professional development, clarity of role and organization of I/T services; and, on the other hand, the problems that policy makers and potential contributors to policy - politicians, institutional heads but also applied linguists - have in understanding this area, which all profess to understand but seldom do.

Both within language policy and within I/T, the present moment (late 1990/early 1991) is a period of considerable activity and not a little turmoil in terms of organization of programs and services, issues of federal/State relations, and revision of hitherto established policies and practices. There is intense debate over desirable courses of action, while a threatening economic climate is forcing a narrowing of priorities. In this climate it is particularly important to to be able to clearly see present I/T needs, difficulties and prospects, and to calculate realistically its contribution to the society, real and potential, and address the manifold problems and difficulties in the field. It will be the argument of this report that the NLIA could have

a significant policy and practical role in this field.

The wider context of language policy indicates cause for concern after several years of slow but undeniable achievements. The establishment of the NLIA in 1990, for example, carried the potential for a substantial mainstream support for language policy and development across many language issues. By contrast, the recent green payer of DEET (DEET 90) on language and literacy learning, with its implied threat of Commonwealth withdrawal from a wide range of language programs, ostensibly speaks in the name of a national policy on languages while in other ways retreating from it. Within I/T, several key policy developments have made the area more complex but also more volatile: the establishment of a national professional body (AUSIT - the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators), the 1990 election promise of a National Bureau of Language Services, and incessant debates over federal/State relations and cost recovery have sharpened attention on I/T priorities but also caused considerable uncertainty about future directions, and about support for the field as a whole.

This research project is, first of all, not an exhaustive study of the field. I/T is an area little researched, as distinct from being an area incessantly "reviewed" by endless attempts at coordination and bureaucratic transmogrification. Indeed, many areas of potential research will be identified, for there is a dearth of publications in this field not tied to immediate bureaucratic or political ends.

More modestly, this project bases itself upon three approaches:

- a review of major policy documents and other publications largely devoted to language service organization and review
- an outline of institutional development in the I/T field in language services, guiding bodies in I/T, courses and the profession, and to some extent the private market.
- an identification of some of the major policy issues, problems and potential developments arising from the present situation of the field.

This analysis will lead to recommendations for the NLIA on areas where it could make a contribution either in a policy or a quite practical way.

The work in this project has been based largely on public documentation, and this has been supplemented by the principal researcher also interviewing several key figures in the I/T field in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney to understand the work of particular agencies and organizations, and to seek comments on present policy issues. Gratitude is expressed to all these people who gave generously of their time to assist this project.

CHAPTER 1

INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING, THE NLIA AND THE NATIONAL POLICY ON LANGUAGES

The past decades has seen a burgeoning of language policy issues in Australia, and the development of a quite unique - and internationally significant - National Policy on Languages. In discussions of language policy, mention has often been made of issues in Interpreting/Translating (henceforth I/T). Indeed, language services constitute a considerable expenditure for governments both federal and State, and a series of policy documents have identified I/T as an important area. Nevertheless, in looking at this decade of language policy, it is clear that whatever was said in policy documents, I/T has remained outside the mainstream of language policy development.

This gap between the intentions of policy documents and the realities of funding and actual initiatives is by now apparent to all in the I/T field. In November 1990, the chairman of the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) referred to this in a public reception in Melbourne, mentioning that even 1% of the monies flowing in the National Policy on Languages would make a telling contribution to the development of a field which was vital for Australia's interests both internal and external.

Yet I/T has not only been omitted from language policy funding initiatives; over the past decade its salience within language policy discourse itself has seemed to decline, as a study of the major language policy documents and initiatives indicates.

A useful starting point here is to go back to the seminal report on language policy in Australia, the report of the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts in 1984 on a

National Language Policy. The Senate Committee in its long inquiries into this issue devoted considerable attention to I/T issues, ranging widely over the historical development of the field, needs for I/T among Australia's non-English speaking background (NESB) populations and for Australia's overseas needs, shortcomings in services, problems in establishing an I/T profession, the particular problems of I/T in Aboriginal languages and languages of the deaf, and a detailed look at the role of NAATI, and at training needs and capacities.

The inquiry received submissions from a wide range of interested parties in I/T (NAATI, I/T educators, practitioners, language service providers), and there were substantial sections on I/T in the submissions of all the major umbrella bodies or leading government departments (eg the Ethnic Communities Councils, the Professional Language Associations for a National Language Policy [PLANLangPol], the Australian Council of Social Services, and the Departments of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, of Education, of Social Security and of Foreign Affairs). The submissions and representations were generally very coherent, supportive of the

field, and met a ready response from the Committee.

The final report of the Committee devoted an entire chapter to Translating and Interpreting Services, and made a total of 1 1 recommendations on I/T:

Translating and Interpreting Services

Recommendation 96: As a general rule, defendants and witnesses in legal proceedings should have access to the services of well-qualified NAATl-accredited interpreters. (paragraph 12.18)

Recommendation 97: The basic qualification for Australian Public Service translators and interpreters should be accreditation at NAATI Level 111. (paragraph 12.20)

Recommendation 98: Whenever possible, Australian Government departments should employ Australian professionals for their translating and interpreting needs. (paragraph 12.22)

Recommendation 99: Tertiary institutions should

incorporate instruction in the use of interpreters in training courses for professionals, particularly courses in law and medicine. (paragraph 12.27)

Recommendation 100: In-service courses for training professional people in the use of interpreters should be developed by institutions responsible for training interpreters in conjunction with practitioners in the field. (paragraph 12.27)

Recommendation 101: Commonwealth and State Governments should ensure that translating and interpreting services are publicised widely among Australian residents of non-English-speaking backgrounds. (paragraph 12.27)

Recommendation 102: Supporting Governments should consider providing additional funds to NAATI to publicise the advantages of engaging NAATI accredited translators and interpreters. (paragraph 12.33)

Recommendation 103: NAATI should aim to foster the development of Level 111 courses in Aboriginal languages, preferably courses which include some element of specialisation in fields such as health and legal matters. (paragraph 12.37)

Recommendation 104: The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and language departments in higher education institutions should study the NAATI proposals for training translators and interpreters with a view to taking advantage of opportunities for diversification of language courses. (paragraph 12.45)

Recommendation 105: The Commonwealth Government should provide a small number of scholarships for overseas study for professional translators and interpreters to enable them to advance to Level IV or Level V accreditation. (paragraph 12.47)

Recommendation 106: The Australian Public Service

> should continue to pay the Linguistic Availability Proficiency Allowance which should be adjusted from time to time to maintain incentive. (paragraph 12.51)

In addition, the influence of I/T issues on the Senate Committee went beyond its particular recommendations, and was represented as one of four principles the Committee believed should underpin language policies at the national level:

- competence in English;
- maintenance and development of languages other than English;
- provision of services in languages other than English;
- opportunities for learning second languages.

> (Australian Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts 1984: 1.16).

This gave I/T a particular prominence in language policy, and the principle of language services is one that has been widely accepted (if not, as we shall see, always understood) in Australian institutions, and does indeed constitute a significant way in which Australian attitudes towards its NESB populations have developed from previous assimilationist perspectives. In an increasing numbers of fields and institutions, the provision of adequate language services is seen as an essential capacity to deal with all clients and to provide services effectively and equitably. It is part of what will be outlined as the Australian model of I/T (Blewett 1987).

The prominence given to I/T at the level of principle was sustained in the next major language policy document, Joseph Lo Bianco's implementation-oriented *National Policy on Languages* (Department of Education. Joseph Lo Bianco 1987). Adopting a slightly different formulation of principles, Lo Bianco nonetheless kept the principle of language services. The guiding principles of his report were:

- the *conservation* of Australia's linguistic resources
- the *development and expansion* of these resources

- the *integration* of Australian language teaching and language use efforts with national economic, social and cultural policies
- the *provision* of information and services in languages understood by clients

(Ibid:70).

Moreover, Lo Bianco reiterated the view that language services were an issue of the proper functioning of Australian institutions: "Interpreting and translating ought to be regarded as an aspect of service provision in Australia rather than a welfarist program for the disadvantaged" and he urged that "to this end the continual professionalization of the field is urgently required" (Ibid:164). Reflecting other areas of his report, Lo Bianco placed a greater stress on external affairs and language needs in that area than did the Senate Committee: "The need for translating and interpreting between English and other languages in Australia is a consequence of both the linguistic pluralism of the Australian population and the need for expert, efficient and effective conduct of affairs with non-English speaking countries" (Ibid:161).

Yet in the body of the report, the prominence given to I/T issues had certainly declined from the emphasis given in the Senate Committee report. Lo Bianco covered I/T in less than 5 pages, giving just a handful of sentences to I/T in Aboriginal languages, even less on the languages of the deaf, and two paragraphs to NAATI. A total of 4 recommendations were made: the in-principle one that I/T should be seen as an aspect of service provision, (Recommendation 23) plus three others: that there be training of "high level" interpreters/translators in Indonesian/Malay, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese in specialised, technical fields; that key centres be established for training in Aboriginal languages and for the deaf; and a recommendation for the government to provide additional funds to NAATI "to meet pre-specified plans in particular areas of need" (Recommendations 24-26).

Lo Bianco also recommended that one standing committee of his proposed Advisory Council on Australia's Language Policy be concerned with Language Services and the Communication Disabled.

These recommendations, and Lo Bianco's discussion in his

brief section on I/T, compare poorly with the relevant sections of the Senate Committee report. Lo Bianco correctly stresses professionalization, but says little about what this constitutes, mentioning only that this should be accomplished by "control of entry mechanism and registration". The Senate Committee report addressed issues that are the necessary antecedent to such a professionalization: that a professional level (NAATI Level 3) be taken as the standard level for public sector appointment, that there be provision for adequate I/T training across the country, and that professionals in other fields be educated in working with interpreters. Lo Bianco correctly identifies training needs for Aboriginal and deaf languages, (but leaves this to the rather hopeful establishment of 'key centres'), but for other training needs only singles out Indonesian/ Malay, Chinese and Japanese for training in "specialized, technical fields", and otherwise ignores the complex arrangement of training at all other levels in all other languages.

While it may be considered that the Lo Bianco document was influenced by the fact that it was specifically commissioned by the Department of Education (so that a national policy on languages was veering towards a national policy on language education), even in relation to the educational aspects of I/T the report is seriously inadequate and seemingly quite ad hoc in its recommendations. For example, there is scarcely any mention of I/T courses or other training needs. The lack of organizational thinking about I/T is also reflected in relation to financial implications: unlike many other areas of the report, particularly in language education, there are no recommendations for funding made in the area of I/T, except for the call for the government to increase in an unspecified way its funding to NAATI.

Subsequent developments in the funding of the National Policy on Languages (NPL), the establishment of the NLIA and attendant initiatives have all made slight reference to I/T, despite the prima facie prominence of this issue in stated principles. Like the Senate Committee report and the Lo Bianco report, the NPL adopted four principles to guide its priorities:

- English for all
- A language other than English for all
- Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages

- Equitable and widespread language services.

Lo Bianco's recommendation of an advisory council resulted in the government's appointment of the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME), which has had a Language Services Reference Group, but its hitherto focus has been very much on language disability (in terms of deafness, blindness and motor disorders). No member of the reference group has been centrally involved in I/T issues. AACLAME's own report on the NPL for the period December 1987 - March 1990 acknowledged shortcomings in this area, concluding that of the four principles of the NPL "The principle of equitable and widespread language services is currently the one least well addressed by both State and Commonwealth governments" (AACLAME 1990: 10).

And, it could be added, the one least well addressed by AACLAME. This can be seen in AACLAME's own recommendations on the continuation of NPL programs and recommendations for new ones. Under proposed desirable developments of the language services principle, AACLAME recommends two programs, one of $500,000 for training of personnel "dealing with clients experiencing communication difficulties created by some form of intellectual, learning, physical or sensory disabilities, such as aphasia or hearing impairment", and another program of $4 million a year funding local government authorities to develop or extend library holdings in LOTEs and in materials for those with various literacy problems and disabilities (Ibid: 73). Such programs are perfectly appropriate for a NPL and meet real needs, but this is the sum of proposals under the principle of "language services", and it seems an extremely partial understanding of language services to equate them with the programs outlined but not include I/T. Nor does the text of the AACLAME report reveal any greater acquaintance with I/T issues. At the very least, there could be a case for changing the nomenclature of the Reference Group; more radically, AACLAME could bring I/T issues more centrally into the Reference Group's work to better fulfil its own guiding principle.

Other recent documents in related areas also tend to show limited cognizance of I/T issues, even if asserting the importance of the field. The *National Agenda for a A Multicultural Australia* (1989) discussed I/T and related matters in a few sentences only.

Curiously, in the report's chapter on 'Language and Communication', I/T is not mentioned, and the only relevant recommendation is for a review of the Commonwealth public service's Language Availability Performance Allowance for bilingual officers. The report makes its only recommendation on I/T in its chapter on 'Basic Rights' - that a survey be done of I/T needs in the legal area by the federal Attorney-General's Department. This survey has since then been done by that Department, and is discussed below when looking at the profession and professional regulation. The rest of the I/T field remains untouched by the National Agenda.

Finally, the recent green paper by DEET (1990) on language and literacy learning explicitly avoids discussion of I/T issues asserting that these issues will be adequately dealt with, from the Commonwealth point of view, by the proposed National Bureau of Language Services. Issues relating to the Bureau are discussed elsewhere in this report, but even the most enthusiastic supporter of this initiative could scarcely believe that it would be *the* solution to issues such as I/T education and training, I/T accreditation and registration, or a host of other issues that all involve substantial Commonwealth funding. Without needing to make an excursus into more general aspects of language policy politics of the moment, it is clear the DEET Green Paper is intended to rapidly remove the Commonwealth (and DEET in particular) out of a host of programs, concerns and issues in which hitherto it had been a significant participant. Any prospect for broader and more informed DEET interest in aspects of I/T will need to be fought for very hard at the moment.

On a more specific point of nomenclature, and again as a demonstration of lack of understanding of I/T issues, the DEET paper includes recommendations for establishing Community Centres for Literacy and Language Services. These centres would be the local providers of literacy and language programs (including English to NESB migrants), yet the nomenclature of "language services" seems particularly confusing. While "language services" on any understanding may include many services besides I/T, given the present prominence of I/T in other government discourse on I/T (eg discussion of a hoped for National Bureau of Language Services), the use by DEET of this name to refer to something quite different seems a rather puzzling example of two federal departments using the same

name to signify radically diverse entities.

With such a lack of interest in I/T issues on the part of DEET and some other language policy bodies, the establishment of the NLIA seems to provide one of the few more hopeful signs of the continuation of significant language policy initiatives into the future, supported by mainstream institutions. This report will in its conclusions make recommendations on the potential for the NLIA to become involved in significant areas of I/T policy and practice. Given the fate of I/T in the major documents listed above, however, and given the remoteness now of I/T issues from the mainstream of language policy, such an involvement will be, inter alia, a major learning task for the NLIA, and a major reversal of the now historical marginalization of I/T.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERPRETING/TRANSLATING FIELD IN AUSTRALIA

There has been little historical work on the field of I/T in Australia, with the few accounts coming in general surveys of immigration policy and welfare (Martin 1978, Jupp 1988). Before the post-World War II period, the first one hundred and fifty years of white settlement have been little looked at in terms of language contact, with fleeting contributions indicating the considerable historical work still to be done, both in relation to the languages of Aboriginal Australians, and the non-English speaking immigrants (Blake 1981, McNally 1981, Clyne 1982, 1985). Mindful of these restrictions, a current history of I/T in Australia can be talked about only in terms of post-war settlement.

2.1. Interpreting/translating in the context of post-war migration

Martin's now classic contribution *The Migrant Presence* (1978) outlines, from a sociology of knowledge point of view, the slow dawning of awareness of interpreting needs in a society which had come to base its immigration policy partly upon non-English speaking background (NESB) intakes. Australia was certainly not linguistically prepared for this, in the sense of having speakers of languages other than English (LOTEs) in positions to relate to migrants. Australia continued its tradition, begun well before the post-war years, of pressing for assimilation in the quickest possible time. Given that the immigration program always encouraged permanent settlement (Australia has never had guestworker immigration), successful assimilation would clearly involve new initiatives for NESB migrants. English

language teaching was thus provided from the first days of the immigration program, taught to NESB adults (but not to their children who, it was believed, would pick it up "naturally" in the schoolroom and playground). Assimilationist rhetoric and policies were very powerful, and the general presumption that the migrant would soon find his niche in Australia, and adopt English, was long clung to, even when large numbers of NESB migrants in the 1950s were clearly maintaining their culture and languages.

The few interpreters, or perhaps better, individuals who interpreted, in these times came from a marked diversity of backgrounds. Some were well-educated intellectuals, fluent in European languages (Koch-Emmery 1953), but the vast majority of interpreters were whoever happened to be on hand who spoke a relevant language, and spoke somewhat more English than the totally non-English speaking migrant. With large NESB intakes in the late 1940s and 1950s, needs for interpreting arose at some major, critical institutions: immigration centres, hospitals and medical centres, police, social services, housing and transport, arising out of a necessity to serve a growing and otherwise unmanageable clientele. Domestic staff or clerical staff became interpreters de facto, occasionally being elevated to newly created interpreting positions.

In this situation, multilingual interpreters tended to come to the fore, as providing value for money in that they commanded many languages and could do the work of several interpreters with only one LOTE each. These practitioners were drawn from certain multilingual populations: Alexandrian Greeks, for example, who besides English and Greek, also generally spoke Arabic and Italian and French; those from Istra had a command of Italian and Yugoslav languages, while Eastern Europeans who had spent time in Germany often spoke Russian, one or more other Slavic language, and German. It was cost-effective to have multilingual interpreters, for whom language ability was their way out of often the most menial work shared by their compatriot workers. It was this group of very diverse practitioners who began and in a sense invented the practice of I/T in Australia.

Such practitioners formed the basis of hospital and welfare interpreting services, as well as also manning the few small, private agencies that began to spring up in major capital cities

from the 1950s. These agencies tended to concentrate very largely on legal and medico-legal work, particularly the area of workers' compensation which in these times were dealt with as torts, and required often lengthy adversarial dispute.

To say that these practitioners "invented" interpreting is to point to both the innovative nature of the undertaking, and its largely unplanned and ad hoc institutionalization.

At the same time, it should be noted that interpreting for quite different contexts was no less being invented by practitioners in other parts of the world. No account of interpreting in Australia could be complete without reference to the development of a very different interpreting profession serving the needs of international diplomacy. It is important to point out that this other interpreting had also been invented at a particular time and place. While throughout history interpreting has always played a part in international relations, in the world of diplomacy in the 18th and 19th centuries, the universality of French as the diplomatic language made interpreting largely unnecessary, until the significant role played by monolingual Americans at the Versailles peace conference after World War I (Roland 1982). Herbert's (1978) account of this period stressed the innovative nature of the interpreting that had to be done there, undertaken by bilingual military officers as an experiment when the proceedings could not be carried on in French. These early practitioners formed the nucleus of a small but highly skilled corps of interpreters serving the League of Nations and other international meetings. The profession consisted largely of officers of the military or diplomatic service, slowly giving way to private practitioners, who nonetheless came from similar social backgrounds.

As an important advance in technology, the advent of simultaneous interpreting through headphones, conspicuously demonstrated at the Nuremberg war trials, enhanced the role of the interpreter and made it possible to receive the interpreter's message without great delay or repetition in proceedings, a problem of consecutive interpreting. The small group of international conference interpreters rapidly expanded after World War II, with the growth of international meetings and conferences, and has continued to the present day, most notably in the European context and in the United Nations and other international bodies.

These conference interpreters tended to be highly educated, often having lived in different countries either with their families on international duty or through studying, and had gained languages at an appropriate level. Interpreters in this context were regarded as indispensable to international communication, being granted status and rewarded accordingly, and being seen as part of the vast infrastructure that supports international contact. Professionally, the practitioners maintained their standards through their active and watchful International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), which controlled entry to the profession, ethics and industrial issues.

This parallel stream of international conference interpreting existed, and continues to exist, with until recent years very little connection with the development of I/T in Australia. A good account of this international development and its relation to Australia is given in Anne Kerr's memoirs (1988): active as an international interpreter from the late 1940s, Kerr (then Anne Robson) was to become Australia's first and, at the time, only AIIC interpreter. She vividly describes the foundation of the small conference interpreting profession in the post-war years, tracing the burgeoning of the field over the next three decades.

In her professional work, Robson concentrated particularly on the Asian and Pacific regions, the scene of considerable diplomatic and other international activity in these decades. At this time, relatively few international conferences were held in Australia, and where they were the interpreting teams tended to be fully imported, with Robson usually being the only Australian practitioner. As the sole Australian representative also, she was particularly subject, in any work given her by the Australian government, to the penny-pinching attitudes towards her fees: "the attitude, which persisted for a long time in Australia, that a conference interpreter was roughly comparable in value with a guide in the streets of Marseilles" (Ibid:226). On one notable occasion at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Committee meeting in Canberra in 1961, Robson was paid a lower fee by the Australian government than they paid to the imported interpreters doing the same work, which raised serious concerns for her in the eyes of the AIIC interpreters (she was aspiring to AIIC membership at the time), and as a result of her protests to External Affairs over the issue, she was not engaged

by the Department for the next 18 months:

> "What incensed me was not merely the prestige point involved, but the fact that it was my own *government* demoting me to inferior status *because I was an Australian*. The cultural cringe, in a diplomatic context, as recently as 1961!"
>
> (Ibid:228).

Interestingly, in her book there is no mention of any interpreting in Australia apart from conference interpreting, nor any mention of interpreters not connected with the international scene. Her interpreting career ended in 1975 (she married the then Governor-General and became a public figure for reasons quite unassociated with interpreting), and her book perfectly marks the chasm that existed at the time between her profession and the mass of liaison interpreters working within Australia. From an international perspective, they were invisible.

The Australian interpreting field differed markedly, both in terms of technique and of social context, from the international arena. In terms of technique, rather than simultaneous interpreting that increasingly became standard practice in international conferences, Australian interpreters were engaged in liaison interpreting, most commonly in 3-corner situations where the interpreter conveyed messages while being physically present with the two parties, and conveying messages in both directions (as against conference interpreters who often work into one language only). Thus, rather than being an 'invisible' voice, the interpreter in Australia was in direct contact with both clients, and very much on public view.

The Australian social context also brought markedly different relations between interpreters, the parties they interpreted for and their institutional context. First of all, was the relation between Australian institutions and their NESB clients, a relation that had no precedent in white Australia. Martin argues that the initial orientation of Australian institutions was basically one of avoidance and denial; communication problems tended to be blamed on the migrant, and their particular pattern of illness or deviance or other behaviour blamed upon them as well. While the mix of prejudice and tolerance, racism and conviviality at the individual level could be a complex one, at the institutional level the need to

respond to migrants was avoided as long as possible, and then met generally out of exasperation at sheer weight of numbers. Interpreters working in this situation were clearly identified with the migrant population, with their problems, needs, but most of all with their presence: if avoidance failed, then an interpreter of some kind was used.

At a second level, the interpreters almost entirely themselves came from the minority groups, and indeed in many ways reflected the social class background, educational level and other attributes of the migrant population. There were exceptions: as mentioned earlier, some interpreters of this period were in fact well qualified professionals, one of the reasons being Australia's tardiness at recognizing non-British overseas qualifications, so that migrants qualified in other professions at times took up interpreting as a chance to capitalize on their language skills. Even such professionals however were not regarded as such by Australian institutions or professions: if they worked as interpreters, they were identified with the largely uneducated working class masses of post-war immigration. Other interpreters, however, did not gain their languages from education or training, and often reflected this in the broadly accented English they worked with, while their command of their other language(s) varied from considerable fluency in well-known domains to being unable to cope with any complexity in terminology in other areas.

Thirdly, given the ad hoc development of interpreting as an occupation, there was a readiness to rely in large institutions upon any bilingual to assist if needed, so that domestic staff would often be used in hospitals, or cleaners or low-level clerks in other institutions or, indeed, anyone else in the queue who could make a fist of speaking English and the relevant LOTE. At another level, family members or friends were used, a practice of bring-your-own-interpreter that has long continued. With these practices widespread, the interpreter had no occupational status beyond that of any erstwhile bilingual who could attempt interpreting. With no special training or professional development, the interpreter's experience alone eventually provided them with the ability to be better at their task than a non-interpreter. Few institutions, or their administrators, could be much concerned about this distinction.

Finally, interpreters were often characterized by marked

differences in practice. The occupation of interpreter was being invented with few clear guidelines as to what the role of the interpreter should be: there were variations in the expectations of many clients, and in the performance of interpreters themselves. Some saw their role to be the medium of communication between two parties; others saw themselves as being principally there to assist their migrant clients. As concern for social disadvantage overall - and in relation to migrants in particular - increased in the 1960s, concerns for advocacy of migrants' rights were also slowly intertwined into some interpreters' understanding of their role. Some interpreters saw it as an important duty to explain to migrant clients many things besides what was being communicated by the other party; each area of police work, medical, legal, found different understandings of what their role should be. Some professionals found it useful to cultivate interpreters to bring in clients of that language group. Powerful institutional forces, the relative powerlessness of interpreters and migrant clients, and a changing but always confusing ideology of assimilation and integration were the determinants of interpreter practice.

The situation described here resulted in concerns only rarely being expressed over issues such as adequacy of service provision and standards. The ideology of assimilation that prevailed from the 1950s to the 1960s meant these problems were regarded as being merely temporary: soon the migrants will assimilate and learn English. By the mid-1960s however, concern for structural discrimination and migrant disadvantage began to be expressed, and it was becoming clearer that the language issue was a permanent one.

Martin describes the process by which change started to slowly occur, for example when the NSW Association of Mental Health in the 1960s began to publicize the inadequacies of interpreter services in mental health. The association's representative, as a lone voice, twice in the 1960s raised this issue, without response, at the Citizen Conventions. It was not until the early 1970s that other bodies began to focus on interpreting needs, most notably the Department of Immigration, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) and in a more scattered way, various individuals within health and welfare settings. In 1978, the NSW Association of Mental Health conducted a survey of 28 Sydney hospitals and their use of

interpreters, finding only a few with specific interpreter positions, and all except two hospitals relied heavily upon their domestic, clerical and medical and paramedical staff for interpreting. In 1973, the Department of Immigration Task Forces around the country commented on the inadequacy of interpreter services in most institutions, and the dangers this situation posed. The Department of Immigration released a report on interpreting needs in 1973, giving the first national estimate of needs, which assisted in planning the Department's Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service, discussed further below (Department of Immigration 1973). In 1974 ACOSS, through its subcommittee on interpreting, released its report detailing specific areas of need, and argued for a planned approach to meeting them (Martin 1978).

Despite the increase in awareness and services in the 1970s, Martin records there was still considerable reluctance in some circles to attend to communication needs with migrants, and often considerable complacency about providing interpreting services of an adequate standard "as illustrated by a a comment from the Victorian Health Minister on a campaign carried out during 1976 and 1977, to force the State Government to provide interpreters in Mental Health Authority (MHA) institutions. The Minister was reported as stating that there was 'nothing wrong' with relatives, children, domestic staff and other patients being used as interpreters, adding his own keen observation that

> 'All these things are aimed at the lack of interpreters in MHA institutions... There's nothing fresh about that. Various groups have been pushing it for some time. I think there is an urgent need for interpreters, but it isn't as if they have no interpreter services at all'
>
> (Martin 1978:171).

Despite these kinds of views, significant progress was made on a number of fronts in the 1970s, particularly in terms of establishing language services, and attending to the issues of quality of provision. Importantly, developments in I/T came together with other initiatives in relation to LOTEs: throughout the 1970s, in areas as diverse as education, industrial relations, welfare and public administration, previous perspectives

suspicious of LOTEs and their use in Australia rapidly gave way to newer perspectives stressing language diversity, the positive consequences of language maintenance, and institutional responsibility for communication with NESB migrants. In education, a series of moves were undertaken involving support for previously neglected and marginalized languages, including a report of the Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools (1976). After a series of industrial disputes involving migrant workers, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for the first time issued crucial determinations in a variety of community languages to ensure effective communication with all parties to the disputes. In 1976 the Public Service Board introduced for federal officers in public contact work the Linguistic Availability Performance Allowance (LAPA), which provided a material incentive to bilingual officers to use their LOTEs in their official duties.

Reflecting similar concerns this time for Australia's external needs, the Department of External Affairs (later Foreign Affairs) over this period was also attempting to improve the language capacity of its personnel. This was an issue that had drawn considerable political comment over several decades (Hall 1959, Australia, Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 1979), leading the Department to devote considerable resources and time to language training.

Initiatives in I/T thus came together with this marked reorientation of Australian institutions towards NESB migrants. Several of these I/T initiatives deserve particular comment.

2.2. Language services - the Telephone Interpreter Service

Perhaps the most original contribution to interpreting services in Australia came with the establishment of the Emergency Telephone Interpreter Service in 1973. The Service provided telephone interpreting, for the cost of a normal telephone call, and was particularly aimed at dealing with emergency situations critical police or medical situations, accidents and life threatening cases. Importantly, the service was run on a 24 hours basis. Starting in Sydney and Melbourne with 8 languages, the service rapidly expanded in terms of number of languages, centres of

operation and the variety of cases and situations dealt with. In line with the vast number of obviously non-emergency calls that came into the service, the name was changed to the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) in 1974. From that time on, TIS has provided a national service, providing interpreting but also, because of the nature of many calls received, a multilingual referral and information service as well. To handle situations where an interpreter was needed in person, an on-site interpreting service was also introduced.

Originally, the service was established in the Department of Immigration, but when that Department was amalgamated with the Department of Labour in 1974, TIS was transfered to the Department of Social Security (DSS). After further politicking over the place of TIS and the Department of Immigration, TIS returned to the newly created Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA).

The unique place of TIS in interpreting service has been maintained to the present time, and there are several aspects of TIS that deserve close attention. First, the technology of the telephone provided an innovative breakthrough in providing interpreting services. With all the inherent drawbacks of communication by telephone, it was nevertheless a most effective way of getting language services in situations where it might have been impossible to provide an interpreter in person, and a most efficient way of handling brief interpreting situations or multilingual information situations, where many calls crossed the boundaries of interpreting/information.

Secondly, TIS provided a national service of open access, and is the only language service organization to be able to maintain such a national network. As well as its telephone work, the on-site facility extended the range of the organization, making it the most visible of language services. Thirdly, and of critical importance for future policy issues, was that the TIS national network continued when other language services were set up throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with TIS often providing essential back-up (for example after hours, or where there was overflow work local agencies could not handle, or in languages not catered for elsewhere).

Current issues in relation to TIS are covered in future chapters of this report. Over the years, TIS has had many overseas visitors come to inspect this particular Australian

innovation which, in its specifically telephone interpreting function, remains a service unique in the world.

2.3. The Committee of Overseas Professional Qualifications and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters

If TIS was a bold experiment in establishing a national interpreting network, equally bold in many ways was the attempt to create a national standard and accreditation for interpreters. The moves outlined by Martin (above) to push for increased services and increased quality in services resulted in the question of interpreters' and translators' qualifications being given to the Committee of Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ) (a body established in 1968 to overcome previous difficulties in lack of recognition of overseas qualifications). The Committee's Working Party on Interpreting reported in 1974 on what needed to be done in terms of accreditation levels to provide for basic standards in I/T and related language levels. Working from the few overseas models available, and taking into account the particular needs of I/T and related practice in Australia, COPQ stipulated 5 levels of I/T competence, recommended ways of accreditation in each, and recommended the establishment of a national organization to carry out accreditation and overall monitoring of standards.

The 5 levels of COPQ, with some modifications, have determined the accreditation structure for interpreters and translators ever since. The levels outlined were:

Level One:	Language Aide Grade 1
Level Two:	Language Aide Grade 2
Level Three:	Interpreter/Translator Grade 1
Level Four:	Interpreter/Translator Grade 2
Level Five:	Interpreter/Translator Grade 3

(COPQ 1977)

COPQ was moved to make this grading by consideration that there was a spectrum of bilingual work, starting with a low-level language aide -"personnel who would use language as an aid to help them perform their primary function, e.g hotel staff,

telephonists, airline clerks, and other personnel who, in carrying out their duties, may come into contact with non-English speakers" (Ibid:16). Clearly, this was not an interpreting level, but covered largely monolingual work in a LOTE.

Level Two was seen as an advanced language aide, again not an interpreter, and was basically marked by the practitioner being able to deal with more complex texts, in the same domains as the Level One.

Level Three was the basic professional level for a full-time interpreter or translator, defined as "general purpose tasks in interpreting and translating in areas such as medical, social welfare, business, travel, escorting and legal matters (police work and lower courts) etc." (Ibid:19)

Level Four was an advanced interpreting level for assignments "such as higher courts, international meetings and conferences, and various urgent and delicate situations" (Ibid:21), while Level Five was for international conference simultaneous interpreting.

COPQ thus saw the tasks appropriate to the various levels covering a very wide gamut of situations, and its newly found five levels sought to emphatically differentiate I/T work from other bilingual work (as a bilingual aide, receptionist, or bilingual officer).

For COPQ, Level Three was the pivot of the system, the basic professional level of interpreting or translating. It saw this as a level distinguishing those who could carry out professional I/T tasks on a full-time basis. In the longer run, COPQ foresaw that with accreditation tests established, a profession could develop that would in time become capable of monitoring its own accreditation and standards, in line with other professional bodies. It recommended a national council on I/T to set about accreditation and maintain standards in the field.

Acting on COPQ recommendations, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) was established in September 1977 by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, charged with setting national accreditation standards and leading towards a profession of I/T. Its terms of reference covered the setting of standards, developing and implementing accreditation procedures, and accrediting courses in I/T. Crucially, NAATI's role was also seen

to be a terminal one, leading to a fully fledged professional body taking over its functions. NAATI's proposed life was to be very brief, its Terms of Reference including the objective

> "To develop the basic infrastructure for the emergence of a national self-regulating professional body in the expectation that this body would, within five years, assume responsibility for the profession, including accreditation."
>
> (NAATI 1978)

In setting about its work, NAATI sought first of all to define more clearly the levels of accreditation, and here made some crucial alterations to the COPQ categories. At the top, it reorganized Level 4 and 5 for interpreting, making Level 4 the level for advanced interpreting, including international conference simultaneous interpreting, and leaving Level 5 not as a particular level of I/T practice, but as a 'senior' level for those Level 4 practitioners showing leadership eg having particular responsibilities such as organizing the work of other interpreters, thus trying to create a career top for these practitioners (NAATI 1978).

At the lower levels, in a move that had considerable impact on the wider profession, NAATI changed Level 2, combining both language aide and interpreting functions. NAATI redefined this as

> "a level of ability for the ordinary purposes of general business, conversation, reading and writing. It will be the standard level at which existing practitioners of interpreting and translating will be recognized without assessment. This level is also generally suitable for those who use a second language as an important part of their principal duties. Applicants at this level will be classed as Interpreters, Translators, or both" (Ibid).

This complicated and many-faceted definition of Level 2 was to be very influential in future development and future problems for the profession. First, the mention of recognition needs some explanation. Following COPQ recommendations, NAATI devised three modes by which practitioners could accredit: by overseas qualifications, by passing a specially

designed NAATI test, or by completing a NAATI accredited course. However, there were immediate objections to these procedures from some practitioners, who argued that they had been interpreting for many years, were competent in their area, but should not have to sit NAATI tests to be accommodated in the new system. These practitioners argued that NAATI should ratify their experience by granting automatic accreditation. NAATI relented to this pressure, and introduced a fourth kind of accreditation - "Recognition" - whereby practitioners providing evidence of substantial experience in interpreting could receive recognition at Level 2. Fighting hard to keep its vision of a future profession however, NAATI determined this mode of accreditation would only have a short life, and practitioners wanting this form of accreditation had a strict time limit to apply.

This meant that the level envisaged by COPQ as being strictly a language aide level was now also a level at which many genuine interpreters would be qualified. Crucially, the Level 2 accredited practitioner would be classified not as an Advanced Language Aide, but an Interpreter or Translator. However, other parts of the definition, a residue of the COPQ definition, confuse the issue by still seeming to stress bilingual work: "ordinary purposes of general business, conversation, reading and writing", and the use of "a second language as an important part of their principal duties" leaves this quite unresolved, suggesting advanced language aide work but not on the face of it excluding interpreting. Level 2 was to have a significant effect in future of providing accreditation for many bilingual officers gaining the Language Availability Performance Allowance (LAPA was tied to Levels 1 and 2). For interpreters and translators, however, this issue of the appropriateness of Level 2 was to be divisive until very recent years.

NAATI's task of accrediting at all, and having the idea of accreditation accepted was to prove a difficult one. NAATI sought to impose standards on a field that had developed in ad hoc ways and accommodations, resulting in attitudes not always receptive to NAATI and its objectives. It is important to understand that the role of NAATI was limited largely to issues of accreditation. While accreditation was a necessary first step in ensuring standards, it was only an initial step, and it carried with it no force in industrial or organizational terms beyond

that of persuasion. Just as NAATI had to persuade practitioners and would-be practitioners to gain accreditation, so it had to try to persuade others, particularly language services, employers and users of I/T that NAATI accreditation was important and should be the criteria of employability in the I/T field. Even within the then Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA - now DILGEA), NAATI's own department, there was no guarantee that NAATI levels would be adhered to in hiring interpreters; a situation repeated elsewhere.

Even where there was concern to raise standards or stipulate accreditation levels, NAATI's own problems got in the way: for a start, NAATI's testing was slow to begin, with full testing starting only in 1980, and until the mid 1980s the number of practitioners accredited at Level 3, by any means, was still very small, and often too small to justify using Level 3 as an employment criterion: most organizations, if they stipulated levels at all, opted for Level 2, where there was a larger supply of accredited practitioners. Secondly, the nature of the tests themselves became controversial, as soon as they were applied to sufficient candidates, with predictable results. The NAATI 1980 Annual Report dealt extensively with the problems of satisfactorily preparing tests, the unreadiness of many candidates and the generally poor results: of 1053 candidates tested at the various levels, only 193 gained accreditation, in 25 languages. Another 189 gained accreditation through Recognition, and another 40 from courses. The testing path to ensure a profession was clearly going to be slow and tortuous. As we shall see, the path through courses would in some cases be slower still.

Further developments in NAATI need only be briefly covered here, before returning to an account of NAATI in the present in Chapter 4. In the early 1980s, a number of organizational changes established NAATI more firmly and determined its particular direction of development. Most importantly, in 1983 NAATI was incorporated, jointly owned by the Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory governments, but now able to charge fees and raise revenue in its own right. In various ways over the 1980s NAATI expanded its activities, for example Aboriginal languages and the languages of the deaf were added to its repertoire. In other ways, however, the organization struggled, with a considerable backlog in the

number of candidates undergoing testing, and constant problems in establishing a satisfactory testing program in all relevant languages.

Another problem was the envisaged taking over of NAATI's functions by a national professional body. It became quickly apparent that the 5 year sunset clause was an entirely unrealistic one, and the creation of a profession from such a diverse set of practitioners was going to be slow and difficult. The lack of professional recognition of interpreters/translators, the problem that, inter alia, NAATI was established to do something about, itself hindered the development of a professional perspective among practitioners, and hindered the establishment of any meaningful representative structures that could even pretend to speak for the profession as a whole. There were several attempts to set up State organizations, and gradually in the more populous States these began to gather many of the Level 3 and some Level 2 practitioners who were keen to see professional issues pursued. Numbers however generally remained small and the reach of the organizations was very limited: they had to struggle hard to gain any recognition at all from others in the field (eg language services, employers, government) and among many practitioners. For a workforce that had started out as very much an adjunct to the migrant proletarian workforce, gaining professional status would be slow. A national professional organization, foreshadowed in 1977 at NAATI's inception, took a decade to be established, and it will take considerably longer yet to begin taking over any of the functions envisaged for it so long ago. We return to this central issue in I/T policy in Chapter 4.

2.4. Interpreting/Translating courses

It has long been held by NAATI and by others concerned with I/T that I/T practitioners over time must become characterized by similar training and professionalization standards as other professions. Regarding training, NAATI envisaged that courses are "intended ultimately to be the future normal method of entry [into the profession] for candidates for accreditation at Level III..." (NAATI 1978:6), a future orientation that however has seemed to be as elusive in practice as the other NAATI long-term objective of of control by a professional body. If TIS and

NAATI were clearly inventive responses to particular Australian needs in I/T, then I/T courses must be considered another such invention, with again few overseas models for guidance - indeed overseas models, largely of I/T courses for conference interpreting, have had relatively little influence in determining Australian curriculum. Confusion among practitioners and service providers over standards and levels tended also to be reflected in courses, and they have had a troubled existence for a variety of reasons.

The first courses in I/T were established in the mid 1970s as a result of the COPQ report and before the establishment of NAATI. The Level 3 courses were led by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and the Canberra College of Advanced Education (CCAE). By the time NAATI was established and was able to attend to courses and their accreditation in 1980, it accredited four courses: one at Level 2 and three at Level 3. At Level 3 these were the RMIT course and one at the South Australian College of the Arts and Education - the CCAE course had not continued - together with an innovatory Japanese I/T course at the University of Queensland that would eventually evolve into Australia's first Level 4 course.

From this point on, there was considerable development of NAATI accredited courses throughout the 1980s, and at one stage it did appear as if courses may develop well enough to become the normal mode of entry to the profession. At Level 3, courses were eventually conducted in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. Level 2 courses were run in all the above cities and in Canberra and Darwin, larger regional centres such as Newcastle and Wollongong, and in Aboriginal languages in Alice Springs (Institute for Aboriginal Development) and at Bachelor (School of Australian Linguistics). Level 1 courses tended to be taught in secondary schools, in scattered instances around the country, the N.T. course at Casuarina and the NSW course at Burwood being the more permanent, as well as Level 1 courses in Aboriginal languages. (See Appendix for a list of courses). Level 3 courses gradually changed from the Associate Diploma award to 3-year Bachelor of Arts courses; the Level 2 courses, exhibiting considerable variation at the start in terms of time and course structure, slowly settled over the decade generally in TAFE colleges as

Certificate courses.

However, despite this burgeoning in the number of courses, from the outset the course were heir to a multitude of problems, stemming again in part from the fragmented nature of the I/T profession, the social factors already outlined that heavily influenced the role of practitioners, and the low status of I/T in the community. In many cases, it was difficult to find enough suitable candidates to provide regular class sizes (a distinct problem in Level 3 courses). Even relative to other language programs, I/T courses are staff intensive and put severe strains on institutional resources. There was a lack of clear career paths for students after graduation, so incentive to do courses was low.

Staff in courses had similar problems: few of them had backgrounds as I/T educators - indeed, courses for liaison interpreting were, like other innovations already covered, very much an Australian invention: staff had not only to teach regular teaching loads, but find course development resources, and construct a curriculum. Staff needed to define their own role and perspectives: some had been practising translators or interpreters, many were LOTE teachers, some were ESL or English teachers, all needing to blend previous academic skills with awareness of I/T needs. There were no curriculum materials available, and teachers had to build these up from scratch. There was also more generally a signal lack of research done by others - while European academia had produced considerable research on conference (simultaneous) interpreting, there is, even to this day, very little produced in the form of research relevant to liaison interpreting. The knowledge base of the courses was thus very uncertain. To obtain some colleagial support for these difficult undertakings, academic staff did organize an association, and an annual Conference of the Interpreter Translator Educators Association of Australia (CITEAA), which has provided a forum for educational issues.

Additional problems attended Level 2 courses because they were normally more flexible in choice of languages and faster to take on languages of newly arrived groups (Level 3 courses tended to teach only the major languages of need, with slow adoption of new language streams). The orientation of Level 2 has been to make more rapid responses to immigration and population moves, including languages of very recent arrivals. This has often resulted in intakes with severe English

problems, as well as more general educational problems, and settlement problems for the students themselves.

I/T courses, with their myriad of difficulties in relation to student intakes, staff preparedness, and the wider issues of status of the profession, also struggled with institutional requirements for economic class sizes, funding formulae largely determined by other courses and institutional imperatives, and difficulties in some cases in retaining I/T as a focus of staff careers. In the late 1980s, there was a decline in the number of courses at all levels, with serious consequences for the capacity to professionally train practitioners. More positively, certain courses have expanded - Queensland from 1985 was accredited as a Level 4 course (in Japanese) and Victoria College developed Graduate Diploma courses at Level 3 to supplement its undergraduate courses. Both these developments, and the general decline of courses overall, are discussed further in Chapter 4.

2.5. Developments at State level - general and specialized services

While federal initiatives were the most spectacular during the early-mid 1970s, the period of the late 1970s and especially the 1980s also saw considerable State initiatives in providing I/T services, in some cases in conjunction with the federal government (through grants or cost-sharing arrangements), in other cases through purely State funded initiatives. Again, Martin gives us a good overview of these developments up to 1978: in Victoria the Education Department led the way in organizing the first specialist interpreter service in 1975, servicing school needs for communication with NESB parents and communities. In NSW, the impetus came with hospital interpreters, organized in 1977 as the Hospital Interpreter Program, providing a mobile force of 27 interpreters to serve 17 Sydney hospitals to replace previous largely ad hoc provision. As Martin interestingly points out, the advent of this service itself provided new problems for medical personnel who had grown accustomed to the ad hoc arrangements of the past: even from the first year of operation

"...it is already clear that doctors and other hospital

> staff also need training to use an interpreter service effectively and that a formal service can be opposed as a disruptive influence on informal arrangements that have developed within, and in congruence with, the traditional hospital hierarchy of authority and status."
>
> (Martin 1978:177)

In 1978, the landmark Galbally Report, the first comprehensive report on post-arrival services to migrants, detailed the by then well-known shortcomings of interpreter services and recommended the establishment of specialist services particularly for the areas of health and law (Australia, Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants 1978). As a result of its recommendations, and also arising from contemporaneous State moves through for example the establishment of Ethnic Affairs Commissions, there were several new initiatives taken.

In NSW, the newly created Ethnic Affairs Commission provided both interpreting and translating services, and the Hospital Interpreter Program steadily expanded, changing its name to the Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS). In Victoria, which by now had a number of hospital interpreters regularly employed in a large number of hospitals, a Central Health Interpreter Service (CHIS) was established to cover needs in the public health field not covered by the hospital interpreters, again on the model of a mobile force of interpreters able to serve a variety of institutions. Also in Victoria, as a result of local organizing, a Mental Health Interpreter Service was established, and a small Interpreter Services Bureau was created to look after State departmental needs outside of those provided by the specialist services. In the 1980s the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission expanded strongly into language services, creating a Legal Interpreting Service (LIS) for use by designated State legal bodies (eg police, legal aid), establishing a Translation Unit, and taking over and expanding the Interpreting Services Bureau to form the General Interpreting Service (GIS). The South Australian Ethnic Affairs Commission also provided language services, as on a very small scale did the NT and Queensland Offices of Ethnic Affairs. Further details of these services currently are provided in Chapter 4.

The developments mentioned above, and the pivotal role of

the Galbally Report, were part of broader changes in Australian society and institutions towards the migrant population, as reflected in the ideological shift from integration to *multiculturalism* in government rhetoric, and an attention to ethnic affairs issues by governments of most political persuasions. In terms of policy developments, these I/T initiatives came at the same time as striking developments in such areas as multilingual broadcasting (especially through the creation of the Special Broadcasting Service [SBS] which commenced operation in 1978), and greater emphasis on communicating with ethnic communities and tying ethnic affairs issues into mainstream politics. Within language policy more specifically, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw government interest in the learning of migrant languages in schools, the growth of Asian Studies and Asian language teaching, considerable developments in ESL, and finally the culmination of the long campaign to have language issues addressed more broadly in the move for a national language policy (Ozolins 1988).

I/T needs were thus only one aspect of a growing commitment to ethnic-affairs related and language-related issues on government agendas, and had to wait until these more propitious times to receive acknowledgement in their own right. Yet the struggle for adequate language services did not end there: while the new State specialist services were critical in meeting a good deal of interpreting need, they were even more successful in uncovering just how large the unmet need was in language services.

2.6. Translation services

This chapter has dealt largely with interpreting services, and certainly it is interpreting that has been the more complex area in terms of services, but also of testing, courses, professionalization and all the attendant issues discussed so far. We deal with some of the important theoretical and practical distinctions between interpreting and translating in the next chapter.

In terms of the historical development of this area, translation services have had a much slower and quieter history, and in the Australian situation are very much the smaller service area, with significantly fewer practitioners and,

interestingly, tending to generate less excitement and overt policy concerns at any level. The Commonwealth's Department of Immigration established its Translation Unit in 1960, thereby founding the first government language service (Martin 1978), and this unit translated largely settlement documents (for example documents relating to work, qualifications, employment, citizenship etc), as well as translating materials of departmental concern, and general documents relating to integration and settlement. The Unit slowly expanded, particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s with increased attention given to settlement issues from the Galbally report and subsequent service improvements (one notable achievement being the translation of the Galbally report itself into 10 community languages, the first time in Australia that a government report had been produced in LOTEs). From the mid 1980s, however, new imperatives affected this service, particularly the beginning of DILGEA cost recovery policies, and the unit slowly restricted its range of free services and began to charge for its work, marketing itself in the end quite widely as a general translating service. This was accompanied by some decline in the number of full-time professionals employed as translators, and greater use of sessional translators. In program terms, the Translation Unit has always been a very small operation besides the massive TIS, both in terms of full-time positions and visibility in the community.

At the State level, EACs particularly in Victoria and NSW have established substantial translation units doing largely departmental-related translations, plus translations for community groups and non-profit organizations. Again, these have been relatively small as compared to the State organized interpreting services of various kinds, but have been extremely important in ensuring that State services and services of a wide number of public and non-profit bodies have been made available to NESB communities through translations. The direction of translation for these units has overwhelmingly been the translation of English texts into LOTEs.

Translation has also been an area of considerable importance for private I/T agencies, both for those seeking work in the ethnic community related publishing area, and those seeking work in the trade and business areas, where in most languages the load of translation has been far heavier than that

of interpreting. As explained in Chapter 4, the private market has been relatively neglected in terms of surveys and research, and there is generally much less published information about the private sector, so that it is difficult to have any clear idea about the size of this market and its growth historically. While the larger part of the private market, as with the public sector, was clearly involved in interpreting, some companies did cultivate a translation market. Perhaps the most prominent of these companies over the 1960s and 1970s, before the advent of EACs and their ethnic-community oriented translations, combined translation services with very necessary multilingual typesetting services. As a rule, these companies would spread their net widely over LOTE translations, newspapers, advertising material and other publications. For translation they would generally use contract translators, though some companies had small numbers of in-house translators. These companies, tied into the ethnic media in a variety of ways, generally provided fewer interpreting services, with the focus on typesetting and publications more readily handling translations. These agencies indeed still remained important even for translations done by the EACs, where typesetting was needed, and they also cultivated their clientele with the promise of tighter deadlines and a complete publishing service as compared to the (then free) government services.

Most private agencies engaged largely in interpreting did offer translation, but for these regular interpreting agencies translation rarely provided a major source of their work. Over the 1970s and 1980s, however, particularly with the growth of trade and business translations, some companies have taken on a larger translation load, and some newer companies have specialized exclusively in translations, to the extent the still relatively small size of the market allows. Examples of these, and the present policy issues associated with these translation agencies are discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING

The previous chapter has outlined the particular character of interpreting/translating as it developed historically in Australia. It is clear that the crucial features of that development (particularly interpreting as a response to a mass NESB migration to a country ill-prepared for it) strongly shaped the practices that arose, and social and institutional reactions to these practices.

In particular, interpreting in Australia grew in circumstances very different to those outlined for international conference interpreting, yet it is important to understand that the purposes of interpreting in the two contexts are not essentially different. Common features and objectives characterize interpreting as practised in a wide variety of settings, and this chapter seeks to explain the central concepts in this area, hoping to illuminate also some of the very persistent misconceptions that have plagued this field in Australia.

3.1. Role

Interpreting has been defined in ways that are not controversial, and it is not difficult to find definitions of interpreting and translating that are generally agreed to among practitioners and users. Indeed, COPQ did so in its report, defining the interpreter very simply as: "one who renders orally, and into another language, one person's speech for other listeners at the time the speech is made" and the translator as "one who renders in writing (or by other means of recording) a text from one language to another" (COPQ 1977:6).

Importantly, the definition of interpreting in particular does not see it as important what particular techniques of

interpreting are used - that is, simultaneous interpreting or consecutive nor in what setting it is carried out - conference booth, liaison etc. Whatever the technique or setting, the object is the same. It is also important to note in understanding some overseas perspectives on these issues, that in some countries "translator" is used as the generic term to also cover interpreting (thus one sometimes sees for example in American TV news coverage "Voice of the translator" when we would say the voice of the interpreter). In some languages there are no separate terms for "translator" and "interpreter", but nonetheless the distinction between oral and non-oral rendering is clearly understood.

Yet despite almost universal agreement about what interpreting and translating are, issues of role, performance, attitude and orientation become highly contested in policy discourse and social understanding of I/T.

A major source of confusion here is not so much over the definition and practice of I/T but the boundaries between I/T and any other activity involving the use of two languages. Indeed, one of the difficulties of defining the role of the interpreter or translator is the fact that the *practice* of interpreting or translating is a very widespread phenomenon; indeed, it is one of the practices that distinguishes a person who knows two languages - they know equivalent words, they can help out in situations where expressions in one language or another are needed, they can perhaps point to subtleties of translation and so on. Toury in a theoretical paper on understanding translation posited the concept of the "natural translator", as typifying the person who knew whatever amount of two languages, and can and does transfer messages from one language into another, adopting Harris and Sherwood's (1978) description - "the translating done in everyday circumstances by people who have had no special training for it" (Toury 1984). For Toury, any theoretical approach to the task of translation meant distinguishing between natural translation and a particular skill:

> "while the *predisposition* for translating is indeed 'coextensive with bilingualism' (Harris & Sherwood 1978...), *as a distinct linguistic skill* it should be taken as coextensive with "interlingualism", and the development of that skill - as a function of the

bilingual's actual experience in translating"

(Ibid).

Transfering Toury's point to interpreting, a crucial factor in understanding interpreting is to understand that not every bilingual person is an interpreter; that is, that not every bilingual person who may attempt the practice of interpreting can also fulfil the role of an interpreter.

The question of role is crucial, for as we saw in the previous chapter, it has confused both interpreters themselves and those who work with interpreters in Australia. Role is clearly related to positions and responsibilities in particular settings and organizations, sometimes closely or even legally defined, but often left undefined as merely reflecting the certain logic of a situation. Whatever the definition of a situation however, the interpreter *as a role* is characterized by certain behaviour, professional and linguistic, that can be predicted by those working through the interpreter.

The *linguistic* aspect here is related to message transfer, the accuracy and fidelity of the message, and all the accompanying translation issues that this involves. As linguistic analysis has over time given us better understanding of pragmatics, discourse, and the sociolinguistic aspects of communication, so these perspectives inform our understanding of interpreting: in talking of the "message" to be transferred, it is clear that we are not dealing with transferring words from one language into another (the hallmark of the natural translator, at least in the initial stages) but indeed transferring the message, with whatever sociolinguistic or pragmatic, or contextual or textual or subtextual aspects this may involve.

At one level, such complexities of message may relate to complexities of terminology. Even for a native speaker of a particular language, certain terminologies can present inordinate difficulties of comprehension. While the average doctor generally knows not to use highly sophisticated medical terminology with most of their patients, there can still be occasions where such terminology may be a problem for native speaker patients. Bureaucratic and administrative terminology can often cause frustration among native speakers. Many native speakers could well be lost when listening to two barristers argue over points of law in a courtroom, when the native speaker's liberty or property may be at stake. For an interpreter, knowledge of such

terminology in both languages is mandatory to work in that sphere. This can only come about through exposure to or study of that field. Any "natural translator" may be as lost there as any native speaker. And of course, one can only know terminology by being familiar with the particular contexts in which it arises and the practices and structures it is used to describe and differentiate.

At a further level, sociolinguistic analysis has made clear that often messages are also conveyed, or modified, by paralinguistic features: a reassuring approach by a doctor regarding an illness may be implied by a careful choice of words (avoiding vocabulary that is anxiety-provoking) but also conveyed through a particular tone of voice. A sharp question from a barrister in a trial may come precisely to surprise or provoke or put pressure on a witness; the demeanour of the witness (including hesitation, confidence, expressiveness) can sometimes be crucial in judging credibility. An interpreter must be able to convey these messages. A counselling session may use particular techniques to have the client "open up". Threats can be conveyed with particular levels of overtness, euphemism can be infinitely varied and suggested; irony can be conveyed by tone and body language. This means that an interpreter needs to be as aware of intention, and paralinguistic ways of conveying messages, as they are of terminology.

At a further level still, but related to some of the forensic uses of language already mentioned, different set of linguistic criteria become important in certain situations where language itself has a particular status, and the "message" need not necessarily be seen as the product of the intent to communicate a particular message. Such areas are for example some psychiatric and psychoanalytic interviews, where the mode of expression and aspects of it will themselves be important factors in diagnosis and treatment. Thus, coherence and incoherence in the patient's discourse will be crucial factors that need to be known by the interviewer. The "natural translator" will indeed react in a "natural" way to incoherent discourse; a mental health interpreter will need to do something else. What the interpreter is faced with in this situation can be gleaned by looking at just one of the classic definitions of the psychiatric interview provided by the American psychiatrist Sullivan:

"such an interview is a situation of primarily *vocal*

> communication in a two-group, more or less *voluntarily integrated*, on a progressively unfolding *expert-client* basis for the purpose of elucidating *characteristic patterns of living* of the subject person, the patient or client, which patterns he experiences as particularly troublesome or especially valuable, and in the revealing of which he expects to derive *benefit*"
>
> (Sullivan 1954:4).

Needless to say, this is only one perspective of a psychiatric interview from one school of psychiatry that a mental health interpreter may encounter. Note that Sullivan does not refer to "verbal" but "vocal" communication, posing the first issue for the interpreter. Further complexities here need not be elaborated in detail; some at least are well known to discourse analysis.

Another field that challenges interpreters in similar ways is speech therapy, where again the object of study is precisely aspects of speech and expression, which becomes the communicated "message".

These three general levels of linguistic challenge (the terminological, the sociolinguistic and paralinguistic, and the metaliguistic) with significant sub-categories within each, distinguish the interpreter's role.

Accompanying this linguistic aspect, which is fundamental to the work of both the translator and the interpreter, is the *professional* aspect, which is to ensure the untramelled direct communication between the two parties, not so much in a linguistic sense, but in the sense of the interpreter, while being physically present, not becoming a "party" to the conversation.

First, it is imperative that the interpreter has no other role that potentially interferes with this communication. To use an example cited from bad practice in the previous chapter, if the interpreter is the child of one of the parties in an interview, quite apart from any concern over linguistic or conceptual abilities, there is a concern that, for the child, the role of the interpreter could well be swamped by that of being the child: it may hinder communication in all kinds of ways, for example if the situation turns to discussion of issues the parent might not want the child to hear (a possibility for example in financial or medical matters). If the interpreter is a spouse or a friend of one of the parties, again these issues might arise, whatever the linguistic

competence of the spouse or friend. The other role of the child or spouse or friend may itself lead to all kinds of interventions, suppressions and additions that are not part of the messages being transferred, arising out of the person's other role.

While the example of the child or friend interpreting may seem an obvious or even trite example, it is important to stress that similar problems may arise whenever anyone with a different primary role assumes the mantle of an interpreter: for a diplomat, say, who in some situation may take on the task of interpreting, quite apart from issues of linguistic competence, there is always the danger of diplomatic rather than interpreting expertise influencing both what is heard and what is rendered. A prudent diplomat, as any other professional, will know when to use an interpreter.

These considerations are the obvious bases of the establishment of the role of the interpreter upon principles of impartiality and confidentiality. In this, there is nothing peculiar about the interpreter's role that distinguishes it from that of any other professional or any other worker with privileged information. Confidentiality is to ensure that information passed within an interview is never used outside of the interview; it is the hallmark of any professional ethics, and is not peculiar to interpreters. Impartiality dictates that the messages of both parties are treated with equal importance, and transferred accurately with all their meaning intact.

Secondly in regard to professional role, the role of the interpreter needs to be carefully distinguished from an aspect that has been particularly confusing in Australia - the aspect of the *institutional* role a given practitioner (eg doctor, clerk, officer, interpreter) may play in a given institution. For example, a concern of early interpreting practice in Australian institutions, described in the previous chapter, was that some workers say in hospitals, migrant reception centres or elsewhere combined interpreting with a number of other activities for their migrant clients - organizing, helping, giving advice etc. Such roles need to be clearly delineated from the interpreter's role, with its particular ethics and objectives. However,it needs to be understood that any professional and indeed any worker within a particular institution may take on a number of activities besides their strictly defined professional role, the criteria being that such activities must never conflict with their prime role.

Two simple examples can demonstrate this: one example, now extremely rare but more common in previous decades was in the medical setting, where an interpreter, while waiting with the patient to be seen by a doctor, takes the medical history of the patient and begins the interview with the doctor with a quick synopsis and perhaps a diagnosis, thereby speeding the entire process of the interview. Such practices did on occasions take place, with the full complicity of the doctor, and given the exigencies of time and resources may have seemed a perfectly good management practice for NESB patients. In fact, such a practice goes against the ethics of the profession - not only the interpreting profession, it is important to note, but against the ethics and professionalism of the doctors as well. Such an interpreter has either no conception of or no patience with the role of the interpreter; they should not be fulfilling that function.

To turn to a quite different example, however, in some present hospitals, interpreters are included in case conferences which discuss particular cases and their treatment and progress. It is not part of an interpreter's role *qua interpreter* to be part of this, nevertheless it is a perfectly acceptable institutional role where the overriding institutional ethic is one of health care, and staff take a team approach to this. In such a setting, an interpreter can be of great value, particularly as of all the staff it may be the interpreter alone who has seen the patient through all stages of treatment.

There are indeed many situations in which an interpreter can be a resource. The obvious analogy here is with interpreters who form part of a trade or business delegation, and may be an extremely valuable member of the team if they have local knowledge, or are able to pick up on important aspects of the other side's delegation that one's own side needs to know, or can add perspectives the other members of the team may not have so readily.

As a more general point of institutional behaviour, however, it is important to distinguish between clear action contrary to professional standards and ethics, and additional tasks taken on which may in fact enhance one's role. To return to the hospital setting again, it is the case that different medical staff of the same rank nevertheless show markedly different degrees of interest in patients and their treatment - some will indeed go "out of their way" to see patients, visit them more often in wards,

spend longer with them, in ways which can vary considerably from staff member to staff member and from patient to patient. Such behaviour, which is part of the interpersonal feature of any ward or clinic, differentiates these staff in the eyes of their colleagues and patients. It does not, however, fundamentally call into question the professional ethics of this practitioner or their professional role. Indeed, such behaviour might be seen as enhancing their role. Thus, interpreters in such a setting may also exhibit the same behaviour, and this does not constitute overstepping of the interpreting role.

This point has been dealt with at some length because even in policy discussions at the highest level, elementary points of role seem either difficult to understand or are consistently misinterpreted. A recent example is in the Peat Marwick (1990) review of DILGEA language services. In an otherwise important and strong-minded discussion of raising professional standards, some rather old stereotypes were dragged out to seemingly distance the role of professional interpreters from that of some medical or social welfare interpreters: in discussing appropriate models of service delivery in specialized areas of health, welfare and legal situations, the report identified the problem

> "that interpreters working in such areas are often involved not only in language services but also function almost as a defacto social worker often providing comfort and performing other services outside those normally associated with language services. As a consequence, it has been suggested that additional training in the social work area or similar may be appropriate for these people specializing in these areas. The apparent fact that many language service personnel appear to be performing these functions raises major ethical and training questions as to why this process has not previously been formally recognized and included as part of structural training programs. It would appear that the supporting role being performed by interpreters functioning in these specialist areas does appear to be an unavoidable by-product of their position and should be recognized as such... "

and the report goes on to discuss "the possibilities of multi-

skilling language professionals in these and other areas" (Peat Marwick 1990:28).

It is difficult to know where to begin to disentangle such radical misperception. Clearly, the Peat Marwick consultants had been told some dreadful stories about interpreters which had scared them mightily. It is interesting that interpreters are identified as "providing comfort", but it is not clear why this judgement is made: do other workers in those settings not provide comfort? Or is comfort given in a LOTE significantly different enough to transform the role of the interpreter? The consultants may not be very clear about what a social worker role is: from the scraps offered in this passage ("comfort"?), it is not conceivable that social workers could see this as their role - indeed, one suspects that the consultants may not be talking about social work but a stereotype of it to point to shortcomings in some interpreters. There is a very simple difference between an interpreter and a bilingual social worker (or bilingual health worker or professional of any other kind) that the report has difficulty grappling with. Certainly, bilingual social workers have no difficulty distinguishing their role from that of an interpreter. The issue of what other functions a worker may play in any institutional setting has been discussed above.

The report's very generalized observations on the different functions of interpreters would come as a marked surprise to the vast majority of interpreters in health, welfare and legal settings: after all, the practice the report seems to identify is precisely what interpreters have been trying to move away from to stress their professionalism as interpreters. The report has fallen for a naturalistic fallacy - that some interpreters, on some descriptions, appear to be doing things in addition to interpreting (as the report doesn't know social work, it calls these additional functions social work), therefore this should be recognized in position, career structure, training etc. Yet the description is not correct, and even if it were correct the consequences do not follow. The need is to have interpreters trained well to perform interpreting, and bilingual workers trained well to perform bilingual worker tasks. Interestingly, this issue has on rare occasions been raised (generally by non-interpreters) in such places as course advisory committees on I/T courses, where it has always been rejected. The suggestions for such training have always lacked coherence, have been based usually upon

impressionistic or quite mistaken assumptions of the interpreter's role, and seem to be no more than offering not very good interpreters additional spheres of work to do poorly in.

This in no way underestimates the real need for effective training for bilingual professionals (an area incidentally the National Policy on Languages has had some interest in). But the first axiom of any bilingual professional or other bilingual officer training program will be that they are not being trained to be interpreters. That some (increasingly few) interpreters misunderstand their role is not in dispute; the idea that the solution to this, or to other complexities in role of the interpreter, is to train them as social workers, is very difficult to understand.

To conclude on the professional aspects of role, it does seem that interpreters are forced to defend their role, and that this role is open to misunderstanding and obfuscation, rather more readily than many other professional roles. This seems to be the problem both of historical development of the field in Australia, and perhaps our "natural translator" conceptions that lead observers to make very ready judgments about a very complex role.

3.2. Translation, testing, teaching and related matters

If interpreting is not the same as speaking two languages, then interpreting is also not the same as translation, and not simply because in conventional usage one is concerned with the oral message and one with written text. It is not easy to find metaphors for the relation between interpreting and translating, however, it may be useful to think of the relation between say physics and mathematics: one certainly needs mathematics (and good mathematics at that) to make a serious contribution in physics, and mistakes in mathematics will render work in physics incorrect; yet physics is not mathematics. Other analogies may suggest themselves, but it is important to consider that, like other significant and ultimately irreducible human activities, interpreting is an area *sui generis* (and perhaps for that reason a cause of so much misunderstanding). In looking at interpreting, as discussed above, one is looking at wider and more diverse criteria of message transfer which includes largely interpersonal communication factors, and the particular status of language in

certain situations, that determine impact and fidelity of transfer.

For example, in testing or assessing interpreting, these other factors that peculiarly affect interpreting and its impact, and provide its context, must be part of the design of testing or assessing, and some of the criteria for successful performance. Thus, a test of interpreting is not only a test of two languages, but must expose the candidate to these other factors that affect communication. Successful translation thus may be a necessary but is certainly not a sufficient condition for successful interpreting and, as is clearly revealed in the field, not all the best translators are necessarily the best interpreters. Given the historically important place that testing has played in the establishment of the profession so far, and continuing problems in this area, it is very significant that, despite these problems, there have been attempts to construct tests that do reflect liaison and consecutive interpreting demands and not only translation tests. Such testing, whether in the NAATI tests or in I/T courses, already represent a significant resource that demands refinement and further development. A significant shortcoming here is the lack of research on interpreting assessment, an issue addressed later in this report.

Likewise in teaching, where courses in I/T have now been established for a decade and a half at various levels, teaching interpreting is not the same as teaching two languages. The skills and technique aspects that consume the bulk of time in interpreting teaching are perfectly common to whichever languages are being used, and it is the command of the repertoire of interpreting techniques that marks the successful interpreting student (again, these are not necessarily the finest translators). Teaching interpreting is thus a specialization, built on a level of fluency of two languages and built on ability in translation, but again with its own sui generis features and outcomes.

In relation to the teaching of translation, even here problems occur because of the unthinking link that is assumed between knowing two languages and translating. In Australia, as in many other countries, one of the functions of translation was as a language teaching device, in the now rather frowned upon methodology of translation/grammar language teaching. Again, translation studies are not of themselves an exercise in languages learning, but rather the specialized use of two languages in particular contexts for given effects. The problem arising from

this in courses has been to have the staff who can convey these distinctions to students. Given the still heavy language teaching backgrounds of many of the staff in I/T courses, while some have very successfully made the transition to translation (and interpreting) teaching as against language teaching, others are still unable to achieve this necessary transition.

* * * * *

The conceptual and role issues discussed in this brief chapter are not always well understood by policy-makers; nor are they necessarily well understood by all those who have at various times practised I/T, nor by all linguists with whatever other expertise in language. They are however the common knowledge of those who have in a variety of ways helped as practitioners, trainers, testers and the few interested linguists who have been committed to the development of I/T in Australia and elsewhere. These perspectives will inform the substantial parts of this report, and shape its identification of issues and recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION OF INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING IN AUSTRALIA

This chapter gives a brief summary of I/T services and related bodies in Australia, bringing up to date the historical survey of Chapter 2, and indicating areas of policy concern to be discussed in future chapters. The most recent detailed description of this area is in the Peat Marwick report commissioned for DILGEA (1990), and readers are referred there for more detailed coverage of each body; only a synoptic account will be given here, to identify major policy and language issues.

4.1. Language services

1.1. Interpreting services

1.1.1. Federal

1.1.1.1. Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS)

The Telephone Interpreter Service is Australia's largest language service, and one that operates in all States and territories. It is a complex organization and actually fulfils several different functions in its own work and in relation to other language services throughout Australia.

a) in its specifically *telephone interpreting* work, it is unique and ubiquitous, providing a 24 hour service throughout the nation. In business hours all capital cities and some other major cities have centres operating; after hours, smaller States and territories are linked to the 24 hour services in Melbourne and Sydney.

b) as an *on-site* service, TIS operates in several different capacities:

i in some less populous States and territories, TIS provides the *only* on-site service, covering the usual community areas of health, welfare, police, and other government department areas. In these places - W.A. and Tasmania - there are no locally organized public sector interpreting services, and in Queensland, NT and the ACT there are only very tiny organized interpreting services of State or territory bodies.

ii in the more populous States, TIS runs its on-site service in an environment in which many other language services may be operating; whatever the operations of these other services, TIS (as in the States where there are no other language services) offers the same on-site service available to anyone in areas covered by TIS guidelines. In many cases, potential users of interpreters may have a choice of government agency.

iii Again in the more populous States, where other local language services exist, TIS clearly provides a back-up service, where the local service does not meet all the interpreting requirements by itself. Thus, for example, a hospital may have its own in-house interpreters, or a State health interpreter service, but for certain languages it may call on TIS interpreters; another way of supplementation is for TIS to provide interpreting after-hours, when local services do not function. In some cases other agencies have paid for these services (which in the past meant paying the interpreter, TIS merely acting as a booking agency) but which now will mean payment to TIS under its recently introduced cost-recovery scheme. For other agencies, the service was free in the past, but will now be charged for.

iv In a small number of cases, formal arrangements are made between other language services and TIS. For example in Melbourne, the local Legal

> Interpreting Service (LIS) uses TIS telephone interpreting after hours as its booking agency, asking TIS to make bookings for LIS using a list of approved practitioners provided by LIS.

These different relationships to other language services, and particularly the complementary functions have often puzzled observers of the I/T scene (Peat Marwick found them particularly difficult to accept), and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Apart from issues of complementarity, three comments need to be made about the nature of the TIS service and its particular orientation and place in interpreting.

First, TIS is a service charged, as is no other, with providing a universal service - through its telephone work above all, and to some extent in its on-site work. The universality referred to here is in two respects - of languages, and of domains of interpreting. Given the settlement orientation of DILGEA more generally, TIS must strive to take on board new languages, as the language demands throughout the country change. The appendices list the vast array of languages that are handled (some very occasionally) by TIS. The service sees it as an essential element to provide access for all languages. This raises enormous problems in finding interpreters of the correct ability. Even in the more common languages, only recently has it been possible to rely upon sufficient numbers of accredited interpreters; in rarer languages (many not tested at any level by NAATI) the problems are never-ending. TIS has in the past not had strict minimum criteria for accreditation for appointment as an interpreter (an ironic situation considering the accreditation body NAATI first developed under the department's auspices) and even though it hopes to enforce NAATI Level 3 (in languages where this is available) by 1992, certainly problems in rarer languages will remain. In interviews with senior officers connected with TIS, they commented that with the exigencies of needing to supply such a service, availability was always a criterion that weighed more heavily than accreditation or competence of interpreters. Difficulties arising from such a situation will be discussed in the next chapter.

Secondly, the universality of the service is also universality of *domains*: as TIS operates both as a service in its own right and

as a complementary service to other, more specialized services, TIS interpreters may be called upon to do interpreting in situations ranging from the simplest to the most complex. Yet TIS in its structures has struggled to establish even the most elementary training for its interpreters, resulting in quite striking discrepancies between the competence of different interpreters and their ability to handle a range of different interpreting situations. It is only recently that training issues have been addressed - before this, only very occasional in-services were held for practitioners, and there was often organizational difficulty in arranging in-services around shift times, with other problems for sessional staff who usually could not be paid for time in training. Training Officers, or Recruitment and Training Officers have from time to time been appointed in the various TIS centres, but the majority of their time has been taken up with recruitment; their 'training' function has on occasions been to run in-service for their own practitioners, but more commonly to run in-services or participate in workshops for user agencies, as a way of extending knowledge about the service and publicising its role. As we shall see, this issue of training in particular domains sharply differentiates TIS from other more specialized services, though it is also an issue throughout the I/T field.

Thirdly, the position of TIS and its relationships to other services are likely to be considerably altered by two proposals, separate but politically quite related, that are being implemented at the moment. The first is the issue of cost recovery for TIS services, already mentioned above, but now universally introduced from January 1, 1991 (for on-site) and due to be introduced in mid-1991 for telephone interpreting. The second is the issue of the National Bureau of Language Services, a 1990 election promise by the Hawke government. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

The universality of the TIS service, the unique contribution of its specifically telephone interpreting, and the long-standing commitment to providing such a language service marks a very distinctive Australian contribution to interpreting, and provides in many ways a model for services in similar multilingual situations throughout the world. The significance of TIS extends well beyond our national boundaries.

1.1.1.2. Department of Social Security (DSS)

DSS is the only other Commonwealth Department with an extensive interpreting service. It is a service that operates in major centres of NESB population, and employs interpreters on a full-time, part-time or sessional basis to directly serve the needs of DSS offices, plus activities such as relevant medical interviews and Social Security Appeals Tribunal work. This service, like all others, receives supplementary help from TIS interpreters when needs cannot be met by DSS interpreters.

The size of the Service is notable, the 1987-8 Annual Report of DSS reporting that 1,580 hours per week are serviced by DSS interpreters, representing the equivalent of some 40 full-time positions (DSS 1988: 98). This represents a major commitment in a government department with a large NESB client base.

The DSS interpreters share some characteristics with those of TIS, but differ in other aspects of their work (some interpreters of course would freelance for both organizations). Like TIS, the DSS service relied in the past upon often poorly accredited interpreters, and often had difficulty in attracting and keeping well qualified practitioners. Training budgets and training opportunities have also been less than needed, especially for the extensive number of sessionals. However, the nature of the work itself has been conducive to the development of expertise, with regular interpreting exposure to highly routinized client interviews, based upon standardized DSS information-gathering and investigatory routines (this does not, of course, mean that every interview is routine!). The structures mean that interpreters are exposed to a high degree of repetition and a reasonable level of predictibility in work - something the TIS interpreter cannot rely upon.

Apart from the sheer structure of DSS work providing a framework and set of clear objectives for interpreters, DSS is also notable in its high degree of commitment to language services, and indeed was one of the first federal departments to adopt an explicit language policy (DSS 1989: 14). It has provided support for interpreters through the publication of bilingual glossaries, and includes working with interpreters as part of its staff training procedures. Several of its other initiatives, apart

from the interpreting service, are also worthy of note. It has in many offices considerable number of staff who use LOTEs as bilingual officers, and receive the Language Availability Performance Allowance (LAPA). Strict departmental guidelines delineate the work of bilingual officers from that of interpreters.

As well, a Telephone Information Program begun in 1989 provides multilingual facilities for clients with queries about DSS entitlements and procedures, and, to further publicize DSS in NESB communities, Migrant Liaison Officers have been appointed from 1989 for the larger NESB concentrations. The Department also is developing bilingual letters and claims forms. In all, DSS has tended to be the pathbreaker in services to NESB clients, and the example of a department adopting a language policy is again an important model of an approach to language issues.

Apart from DSS and DILGEA, there are some very tiny in-house interpreting services (eg in the Australian Federal Police), largely co-ordinating units for the needs of the specific agency's in-house work. These are not covered in this review, but are briefly looked at by Peat Marwick (1990).

1.1.2. The States

As mentioned previously, some States, specifically Tasmania and WA, have no independent locally provided language services outside of TIS. In addition, the language services organized under the Offices of Ethnic Affairs in NT and Queensland are extremely small units, with a minimal administrative staff and total use of sessional staff for provision of services. As well, in the ACT there is a small interpreting service run by the ACT Community and Health Service. These small services will not be looked at further in this report, and some limited information on them is given in the Peat Marwick report.

1.1.2.1. New South Wales

NSW has two main State interpreting services - that provided by the Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC), and that of the Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS).

1.1.2.1.1. Ethnic Affairs Commission

The EAC, which has run interpreter services since its inception in 1978 (NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission 1978), aims to provide a general interpreter service for State responsibilities - over time, the service has developed particular strongpoints in servicing State government departments, and particularly concentrating on legal interpreting needs as needed by State bodies (police, criminal courts, plus a strong presence in Workers Compensation). A total of around 30,000 interpreting assignments are completed per annum. Regional services are provided through EAC offices in Newcastle and Wollongong. The EAC has attempted to maintain close relations with ethnic communities, and its interpreting commitments are part of this general orientation.

The most important recent development in relation to EAC interpreting services has been placing then on a user-pays basis, starting with the Workers Compensation area in April 1989 but since then extending this to all government departments, making it an obligation for State departments to pay for language services out of their own budgets, instead of the hitherto free service from the EAC. For the initial years, the State government would supplement the departments sums relating to the use of language services in the past; in the future, the departments are expected to absorb this into their own operating budgets (and also as a result be able to buy their interpreting from any agency, not necessarily the EAC). A number of community organizations and other bodies (eg State parliamentarians) are exempt from payment.

The EAC has attempted recently to improve service delivery and the quality of its practitioners. Criteria for being placed on the EAC's interpreting panel have been raised, and now include participation in an orientation course that is concerned to give familiarity with areas of EAC interpreting responsibility (eg legal system, police procedures, government organization structures) as well as refining interpreting techniques. A new salary structure reflecting both accreditation levels and levels of expertise has been introduced, and the service is now able to demand Level 3 as the basic level of entry (where the language is accredited by NAATI) and force already contracted

practitioners to upgrade. The interpreting panel is almost entirely sessional (over 400), with few full-time appointments.

1.1.2.1.2. Health Care Interpreter Service

The HCIS provides a massive language service, with over 100 full-time staff plus part-timers and sessionals in several regions performing around 150,000 interpreting assignments, concentrating in regions with major teaching hospitals and high numbers of NESB patients. It is decentralized, with some patterns of service delivery differing from region to region. It provides within each region a largely mobile force of health interpreters, who service major hospitals, health centres, psychiatric centres, rehabilitation centres, non-profit health organizations etc.

The Service locates its interpreters in centres (usually large teaching hospitals) where there are heavy concentrations of patients with the particular language. However, most interpreters will also travel at times they are not needed at their base institution to attend booked sessions at other centres. Interpreters also attend ward rounds and relevant meetings, may on occasions interpret over the telephone and, for those so acccredited, may do translations (discussed with translation below).

The Service concentrates exclusively on health issues, and so can offer new interpreters orientation to this area, and constantly works to upgrade skills of existing interpreters. New recruits are given an orientation to the service, and to advance to a higher grade, there is an obligation to attend in-service courses in a wide range of issues including interpreting skills, the organization of the health system, medical terminology, a mental health course, family planning and other special areas and skills.

The organization has immense problems in attracting and keeping suitably qualified practitioners, for many of the reasons outlined earlier in looking at historical developments. The pay levels are low (currently from around $20,000 - $29,000), with few near the top of the scale, reflecting other poor remuneration practices in the health field. These conditions result in a staff characterized by high levels of turnover and, in some cases, limited commitment to a professional career. Talented

interpreters may in time seek the somewhat better remunerated work at EAC or TIS. On another level, attitudes of other medical staff towards interpreters are uneven, with often low status and recognition. The service actively attempts to improve its image and increase the salience of interpreting in the health field, through participation in staff orientation for other health workers, some limited contribution to health education programs (especially for nurses and medical students) and participation in seminars and workshops.

With an incessant demand for its services, and limited resources, HCIS well reflects some of the most indelible features of interpreting in Australia - the absolute necessity of having language services to enable institutions to properly provide their service, and the low esteem in which those services are often held.

1.1.2.2. Victoria

As outlined in our chapter on historical development, Victoria is the State with the most clearly developed specialist services. It represents the greatest diversity of interpreting services, although recent moves to centralize language services in the State may alter this picture dramatically in the next few years. In January 1991, the Victorian Cabinet decided to centralize all language services within a new Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs. The administrative details of this are, at the time of writing, still unclear. This is a major move in language services in Victoria (though one often discussed in recent years - see Victoria, Language Services Policy Task Force (1987)), and is likely to have a profound effect on future services.

1.1.2.2.1. Ethnic Affairs Commission

The EAC runs two interpreting services - the specialist Legal Interpreting Service (LIS) and the generalist General Interpreting Service (GIS).

GIS provides, similarly to the NSW EAC, an interpreting service for use by State government departments which do not have their own interpreting service. It covers a wide range of domains from housing to transport to consumer affairs to local government, and also services some community groups, trade

unions and non-profit organizations. It employs a handful of full-time interpreters, supplemented by a panel of sessional interpreters shared with LIS.

The Legal Interpreting Service (LIS) represents a major innovation in Australian language services, a service explicitly devoted to the legal field. It provides interpreters to an ever-expanding range of legal-related bodies, originally starting with the Police, Attorney-General, Legal Aid and the Office of Corrections, but now expanding into legal areas of Community Services Victoria, Transport Accident Commission, neighbourhood mediation centres and the Consumer Affairs Tribunal. Its services can be used by these organizations in their work with NESB clients, and the particular focus of the work means that LIS can attend to issues of training both for its interpreters and for the user departments. For interpreters, LIS runs a legal orientation course, which covers the structures and procedures of the target departments, as well as general legal and court issues, and practitioners must normally have done the orientation course to be placed on the LIS panel.

In relation to user departments, LIS runs sessions on publicising their service and on working with interpreters. In areas where there are specific educational programs (eg the Police Academy) these activities constitute part of the curriculum.

The emphasis on training, supplemented by an explicit preference for Level 3 accredited practitioners, enables LIS to promote a strongly professional image. It is particularly concerned with the very exacting nature of much legal interpreting work, and the proper understanding that all parties - not only the interpreter have of interpreting in the legal context. LIS normally avoids using TIS interpreters, except when there is none available from its own panel; as outlined above, it uses TIS as its booking service after hours. LIS has no full-time interpreters as such, but uses its resources for full-time staff to appoint training officers, who have a central role in professional development, legal orientation and education for practitioners and contact departments; the service delivery is provided by its panel of sessionals .

1.1.2.2.2. Education interpreting service

This service, the first State specialist service to be established, has recently fallen on hard times, and shows the problems that a small interpreting service can have within a large State bureaucracy. Originally created to meet the needs of communication with large numbers of NESB parents and students in Victoria's State schools, the service stabilized by the 1980s with just over 30 full-time appointments. Recruitment of the service reflected in many ways the pre-professional days of I/T in Australia, with staff ranging from practitioners with Level 3 accreditation in both translation and interpreting, to those without accreditation.

The service has catered for a wide range of interpreting situations within the State education jurisdiction, from parent interviews to psychological assessment in special education, and it deals with what has become an increasingly bewildering terminology of educational change (both bureaucratic and substantive) in the 1980s. The major difficulties for the service have been essentially bureaucratic and finally financial; several bouts of organizational restructuring unsettled the service, and moves initiated for other purposes within the education system (eg regionalization) impinged on its effectiveness. There have been continual changes in lines of responsibility and management, and some of the better qualified practitioners have left to make careers elsewhere. Adequate political and managerial support from the education hierarchy at times seemed to be lacking.

The monumental financial difficulties of the Victorian government by 1990 also affected the interpreting service: as part of severe cuts to the education budget, the interpreting service's establishment was halved. The recent Cabinet decision to centralize all State language services in a new Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs could mark the end of an independent education interpreter service, though actual details of the reorganization are not yet to hand.

1.1.2.2.3. Health interpreting

The health area in Victoria has several distinct services, each with its own pattern of historical development as outlined in

Chapter 2. There have been significant attempts in the past to amalgamate or administratively co-ordinate these services (Rodopoulos 1985; Victoria, Language Services Policy Task Force 1987), but this has only partially been accomplished now in the recent restructuring under a new ministry (the hospital interpreters remain as hospital employees).

1.1.2.2.3.1. Central Health Interpreter Service (CHIS)

CHIS, established initially with Galbally funds, operates in many ways similarly to the Health Care Interpreter Service in NSW, but with a couple of crucial differences. First, within the health sector, CHIS does not have an exclusive place, but complements the work of hospital interpreters and a specialist Mental Health Interpreter Service (both discussed below). Secondly, while originating in the Health Department it now runs as an independent body with its own board of management. As the largest health interpreter service, it provides a far-reaching service based on the mobile model, with interpreters located in two offices moving to interpreting appointments in hospitals, health centres, and a variety of other health related public or non-profit bodies.

CHIS employs over over 30 full-time interpreters, plus part-timers and a panel of sessionals, attending some 25,000 appointments a year. The main feature of CHIS is a very clearly broadcast ethic of professionalism: CHIS sees itself as exemplifying a professional approach to health interpreting, a field often characterized by poor quality service. There is an emphasis on recruitment of Level 3 practitioners, and on extensive in-service both for its staff and for user agencies. There is a good deal of attention to some of the more difficult area of interpreting (eg psychological assessment, speech therapy), plus a willing involvement in newer health promotion and preventive medicine initiatives in relation to ethnic communities, entailing not dialogue interpreting but consecutive or simultaneous interpreting to groups.

CHIS provides an interesting contrast to a service such as LIS which is based upon sessional interpreters: CHIS sees merit in a full-time staff, with a fundamental commitment to health interpreting and the development of professional skills within that field. It stands as a very important model of both

service delivery and professional development in a specialized field with a heavy volume of demand for interpreting (Solomou and Pappas 1989).

1.1.2.2.3.2. Mental Health Interpreter Service (MHIS)

MHIS has met the specialized needs of mental health interpreting in Victoria, with a small number of full-time interpreters and a panel of sessionals. This makes MHIS a relatively tiny service, but despite this it services some 8,000 interpreting situations per year, many of them extremely long and complex. The rationale for such a specialist interpreting service stems from the nature of mental health work, where language is used not only for communication but for assessment and in some cases for therapy, and normal patterns of discourse are often severely altered. Within I/T, the full-time staff of MHIS would be regarded as among the most professional and skilled practitioners in the field.

MHIS is very careful and selective in choosing its sessional staff, and receives some supplementation from CHIS (which itself seeks to train its staff in mental health techniques) and some selected private agencies. It has made only very limited use of TIS, on a fee for service basis.

A problem for MHIS has been that, because of the small size of the service, it has been difficult to expand the number (an establishment of 6) and the range of languages of full-time staff. Besides its direct service provision, it has also been heavily involved in in-service, staff training and user education, despite lack of resources. MHIS, as one of the smallest specialized services, has a unique place in servicing a field that has often been seen as a serious problem area for NESB clients and the delivery of effective treatment to a multilingual population. The recent announcement of its relocation as part of the Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs will test whether its particular focus and highly specialized contribution can be maintained.

1.1.2.2.3.3. Hospital interpreters

Having to a great extent disappeared from the scene in many other States, hospital interpreters still hold an important place

in the health field in Victoria, with around 40 equivalent full-time positions in a number of hospitals and some community health centres. Historically, as we saw, hospitals were among the first sites where interpreting in Australia was invented, and we saw too the problems over standards and adequacy of service in the era before accreditation and professionalization.

Given historical developments, hospital interpreters are a diverse group, ranging in levels of accreditation from none, to recognition, to Level 3 accreditation. While some hospitals have developed highly specialized services, with well accredited practitioners working in English and one LOTE, others have relied on multilingual and often lowly accredited staff. Recently however, several moves have been made to professionalize this service: a new hospitals award has stipulated Level 3 accreditation for future appointments and a sunset clause for non-accredited staff, and in 1990 hospital interpreters sought to raise their image by the formation of a national hospital interpreters association.

While specialized health services at times seek to differentiate themselves from the hospital interpreters, this group continues to play a major role in primary health care. The more active hospital interpreter services are also heavily involved in user education for medical and non-medical staff, translations and involvement in case conferences, and are finding professional recognition from their medical and paramedical colleagues. In some of the more poorly staffed services, however, the marginal nature of their position and lack of professionalization have not yet been overcome.

1.1.2.3. South Australia

Some radical changes to interpreter services have been undertaken in South Australia, which to some extent has led the way in centralization and rationalization of State services under a single structure. While previously S.A. had hospital-based interpreters, occasional other interpreters in different agencies and an Ethnic Affairs Commission interpreting service, all these services have now been centralized in an Office of Language Services. In order to give the office flexibility in the light of future demand, the small number of full-time staff have been appointed on short-term (2 or 3 year) contracts.

The rationale for such a centralization has been to maximise effectiveness of operations in a system where demand is often small for a particular language in a particular agency at a given time, but where a system-wide demand exists and can be satisfied through effective co-ordination.

1.2. Translation

1.2.1. General government translation services - federal and State

Compared to the relatively complex organization of interpreting services, translation is a field with far fewer entities and far less variation in style of organization. Again, DILGEA provides a national service, with major translation units in the larger capitals, while State Ethnic Affairs Commissions (except in WA and Tasmania) also provide a translation service largely for State government agencies and community organizations. All these units (with the exception of Victoria's EAC) have moved to a system of user-pays, with exceptions for particular categories of documents (eg DILGEA provides free translation for settlement purposes for the first 2 years of settlement, and for a very limited range of immigration-related bodies; State EACs generally make exceptions for certain community non-profit bodies). For the rest, user-pays is an established system and in many cases State and federal translation bodies have moved close to commercial firms in rates. This has caused some concern in the private market, to be discussed in the next chapter.

For Victoria, the anomaly of the EAC not being able to directly receive payment for service, plus a strong ethic of providing a free service, means that there is little user-pays work, and where it exists the payment goes into consolidated revenue.

Sizes of translation units are generally small in comparison with interpreter services, and extensive use is made of contractors. DILGEA's total full-time Translation staff numbers less than 20 spread over Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. The EACs have smaller full-time staffs, with Victoria having a dozen but NSW less than half a dozen full-timers. The bulk of translation is thus done by contractors who are usually paid by

the number of words translated.

While having relatively few full-time staff, all these translation units have invested heavily in technology, with advanced multilingual word processing systems now common, and higher standards expected of presentation. In some cases contract staff are encouraged to use this equipment and translate straight onto systems. A perennial issue for these translation units has been that of turnaround times, and to a lesser extent some issues of quality and translation appropriateness. The Peat Marwick report was particularly critical of turnaround times in government services, pointing out not for the first time that this represented serious organizational rather than actual translation problems, for many of the contractors employed by government units were the same as those contracted by private agencies, who seemed better at meeting tighter deadlines.

There appears to have been a heightened awareness of these issues in government translation units; all officers of these units interviewed for this report agreed with the general criticism of past practice, and pointed to changes made recently to overcome these problems, some reporting markedly improved turnaround times for their translations in the last year. There is certainly a greater consciousness of being more subject to market forces and market criticisms, a subject to which we return in the next chapter.

1.2.2. Specialized government translation units

There are relatively few specialized translation units, the most important being the federal DSS Translation Unit, the Health Translation Service in NSW, some small translation units in major government instrumentalities such as Telecom and bodies such as CSIRO, and two small translation units, which started out as specialized education translation units in Victoria. All of these units are small, relying greatly or almost exclusively upon contract translators, but do illustrate some important functions of translation in government settings.

The DSS Translation unit deals with a large volume of multilingual material that has now become an essential part of DSS' operation. The Department spends around $1 million a year on translating and publishing material in LOTEs, largely guides to services and multilingual publicity material. A handful

of full-time translators are supplemented by a varying number of contractors, and DSS is concerned to have its material produced in new languages when immigration sources shift. Other areas of translation work include bilingual glossaries and claims forms, mentioned earlier.

While DSS translations receive wide public exposure, in the in-house translation services for government and statutory bodies (Telecom, CSIRO, Australia Post etc), translators work for in-house purposes, largely related to technical translation needs. In some cases these are connected to projects undertaken overseas by these bodies, but in the majority of cases relating to commercial, information and technical dealings with overseas suppliers of equipment and services or information sources. These in-house agencies do not form part of the concerns of this report, and some brief further information on their structure and activities are given in the Peat Marwick report, which seeks to draw them within the ambit of its discourse on language services.

The Health Translation Service in NSW is the most noteworthy of specialized translation services at a State level. A service of the NSW Department of Health, it is located within the Health Promotion Unit. Its function is to translate materials of general application in health, and is particularly concerned with areas of preventive medicine, publicity of services, and information on particular health issues and procedures, which may be produced by a range of health services in NSW. It does not translate documents relating to individual patient treatment (a task performed by staff of the Health Care Interpreter Service). The focus of the service is thus longer-term health promotion. The service employs full-time only a small co-ordinating staff, relying exclusively upon contractors for the translations. Features of the service's work include a detailed needs assessment for texts submitted (at times finding that agencies want translations of texts on topics with suitable translations already available), and a checking process by which each translation is checked by another translator, with the two of them coming to consensus on points of issue before the text is accepted for publication. The time taken to ensure this is sometimes considerable, but with the translations usually aimed at long-term use rather than short-term need, the extra time and cost involved is considered justified. A register is published

of translations, with regular updates. Interest in the translations already done often comes from outside of NSW (Cass 1987).

Finally, in Victoria, two small agencies originating in the education system have concentrated on education material, though they are now expanding into general translating units. The Richmond and Flemington translation services were established in the late 1970s as part of community education centres, providing I/T services to local schools, receiving finance on a generally ad hoc basis from various education and community sources, often struggling to maintain an existence (Victoria. State Board of Education 1985). In the late 1980s the units became broader translation units, doing less in the interpreting area, and moving to fee for service for largely educational, but also other community-oriented translations. Within education, notable achievements have been the production of multilingual standard school forms for a range of purposes used throughout the education system, and considerable involvement in producing multilingual publicity material connected with major reforms of the school system and curriculum. Financial constraints have meant the units operate largely as clearing houses and coordinating centres for contract translators. They have in recent years become more generalized translation units, but with still a heavily education and community-oriented clientele. The future of educational translating in Victoria is presently unclear.

One final word needs to be said about translation. As indicated above, in some instances there is considerable translation work done by interpreting services, and there has often been debate about this link and the correct place for translations to be done. Certainly of the services surveyed so far, the Health Care Interpreter Service in NSW and the Mental Health Interpreter Service in Victoria has full-time staff often doing translations related to their interpreting work. Other interpreter services (especially of a specialized nature) may also develop translation in the future as a major function. Needless to say, many individual practitioners may also be translators on contract even when holding full-time interpreting positions, so the two fields, while technically separable, are often manned by the same practitioners. We will return to issues of the relation between interpreting and translating in the next chapter.

4.2. The private market in I/T

The fundamental disproportion between the amount of space devoted in this report to government as opposed to private language services reflects not disproportion of importance, but rather a very notable disproportion in the amount of information available about the respective services. There have been few areas of government service that have been as endlessly reviewed and investigated as have language services: the bibliography in this or in any other Australian publication on I/T easily attests to that. On the other hand, the private market has remained to all intents and purposes a closed book, little written about, little researched and often little understood by organizations in the public sector.

The historical development of private agencies covered earlier reveals an extremely varied situations, from agencies that were set up as family businesses with small numbers of practitioners, to larger agencies concentrating heavily (in interpreting) on workers compensation and related matters, to highly technological and aggressive businesses in interpreting and above all translation.

The present state of the private market reveals all the above variations, plus more. A fundamental question of the private market - a question this report cannot adequately deal with, is its size. There is no reliable estimate of the size of the private market, and indeed some 'official' pronouncements on this appear way off the mark. Thus, in material presented to the Senate Committee inquiry, NAATI estimated that "perhaps only twenty to forty people in the private sector earn a full-time living solely from their language work" (Australia. Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts 1984: 12.9). In interviewing the head of one of Sydney's largest private agencies in 1990, this one agency reported having some 20,000 interpreting assignments per annum, and this high volume had been maintained for some years. Even given the time difference from the early 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, it would seem that this one agency would come close to using as many full-time equivalent practitioners in one city as NAATI had suggested for the whole country. Even the recent Peat Marwick report shied off making an estimate, using indirect NAATI estimates of the

proportion of accredited individuals practicing.

In sum, we do not know the size of the market and it would require a much more detailed research effort to find out. Every indication is however that the private market is not only sizable, but steadily expanding, with opportunities for innovative services to make considerable impact both within Australia and overseas.

Just what kind of impact can be made by private I/T agencies is illustrated by taking three private agencies of very different kinds that have impressed themselves not only on this report, but upon the whole field of I/T:

i Aggressively confronting the multilingual market: Ethnic Communications in Sydney. Ethnic Communications is an agency with an unusually public approach to private marketing. It sees the multilingual market in Sydney (and further afield) as an opportunity for language work at several levels: interpreting and translating, publication and typesetting and distribution, and marketing and consultancy services. Importantly, this agency has made the transition that the Lo Bianco report talked of - a transition from language services as welfare to one of normal service provision - and taken this one step further into the private arena to sell multilingualism as an important arm of business and overall marketing (not limiting itself by the way only to the Australian market). The company produces a widely disseminated newsletter, promotes ethnic business people with innovative approaches to business in Australia or overseas, and has also aggressively targeted the hitherto traditional welfare area of translation and publicity of government services to ethnic communities, providing a translation and publications service that can compete with State agencies.

   It should be noted that this phenomenon of very targeted promotion of private services in multilingual areas (including invading previously government-only areas) seems more typical of the Sydney scene than of Melbourne, with several other Sydney agencies also very vigorously promoting their services across the interpreting/translation/publications spectrum.

ii Interpreting at the top of the profession: AIIC in Australia.

In looking at the "invention" of interpreting in Australia, one useful point of reference has been to contrast Australian developments with the hallmark of professional interpreting development in Europe and international agencies such as the United Nations. Of particular note there (and in contrast to Australia) was the pre-eminent role of the profession, and the role of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), which has acted to regulate standards and rigidly control access to international conference interpreting work. It is a sign of the sea-change that has taken place in Australian interpreting that now there are sufficient AIIC members in Australia to make their presence felt, and advertise themselves as providing a service. Much of the work they have been involved in has been in relation to typically Australian community interpreting situations (particularly legal work), but it has also included foreign affairs work, international trade and business meetings and now, a small but growing trickle of international conference work, for example one on Chemical Weapons held in 1989 which employed 16 Australian conference interpreters ('World spotlight on Australian conference interpreters', as it was enthusiastically reported in *NAATI News* vol. 2 no.3, 1989).

The coming of AIIC interpreters to Australia signals a marked improvement of high-level interpreting resources in the country, and demonstrates that in Australia there is a range of interpreting demands that need to be satisfied, from the most local community interpreting situation to the most international of work. AIIC interpreters have been active in the profession here, with links to NAATI, educational endeavours and above all the professional bodies. It is ironic to note that at the same time as AIIC interpreters with their more international perspectives are influencing Australian practice, some AIIC interpreters in Europe are specifically focusing on hitherto relatively neglected community interpreting opportunities (Driesen 1988). The implications of such developments will again be addressed in the next chapter, particularly the role of the AIIC interpreters in providing a very much needed 'top' to the I/T profession in Australia.

iii Selling translations overseas: Fujitsu. Quite away from the public limelight, the local arm of Fujitsu has secured the contract from its parent company in Japan to provide the worldwide translations into English of its Japanese product materials (largely technical manuals for mainframe computers). The Australian subsidiary won this contract in international competition, and now employs over a dozen translators in this task in several cities, both Japanese and English native speakers. In outlining his company's activities at the Interpreter Translator Educator Association's Conference in Adelaide in 1990, translation section head Tony MacGillycuddy argued that there was tremendous export potential for Australia in its language services, precisely because of our multilingual population and language resources. At the same time, he noted the amount of poor translation work, partly reflecting a misunderstanding of the translation process but partly also a complacency of one's ability and of the potential market: with good translation from competent and aware practitioners, the Fujitsu example could be repeated several times over for a variety of international markets.

These three examples indicate the newer influences that are afoot in Australian I/T in the private market. Yet, while each of them is perhaps quite startling in its innovativeness, in other ways each of them is simply demonstrating principles and beliefs that have been long held in I/T in Australia: for example, that multilingualism should not be regarded as a problem, but as a resource; that the particular kinds of liaison interpreting and community interpreting developed in Australia are worthy of being considered alongside European models of conference interpreting, not as an inferior mutant of that genus.

If these are some of the currents in the pace-setting agencies, it is also important to recognize the slow but cumulative change that is taking place more generally throughout the private market.

First in interpreting, while the historical relic may still exist of the small, rather feudal private agency dealing almost exclusively with workers compensation, currying friendship with doctors and lawyers and selling other services (insurance, taxation) on the side, while this may still in isolated cases exist,

the winds of professionalism, of accreditation, of accountability and marketability and above all of being part of a profession with standards, now is evident throughout private agency work. Few private agencies rely any more upon just their name or reputation: in publicity, they stress rather the accreditation levels of their interpreters, and the specialized areas in which they are competent. While not being immediately disloyal to faithful retainers who worked through the long pre-NAATI and pre-AUSIT years, it is now clear they will direct their work to the accredited and the competent. However, these agencies were careful not to dismiss outright the "old school", very often pointing to their experience and reliability, valuable attributes in this field.

In translation, there is a greater willingness to look for work regardless of its category and its source, and greater interest in opportunities in business and in trade, with the concomitant higher standards of production and meeting of timelines than has been the case. To illustrate the spread of languages that are now being handled by major translation agencies, one Melbourne company listed the following as demand languages in its own work:

> Albanian, Arabic, Mandarin, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Macedonian, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Distinctions between 'community' and 'trade and business' languages have clearly been transcended here.

As well as specific moves to better meet the interpreting/translating market, there are also concerns in the private market to move towards more sophisticated considerations of career structure and long-term development of agency capacities. The Associated Translators and Linguists private agency in Sydney, for example, having largely used contractors in the past, now has steadily increased its full-time professional staff to 6, with an aim of 9-10 full-time practitioners in the near future. These staff would all be accredited at Level 3 or capable of achieving that level within 6 months. Apart from being available on call for the agency's assignments, the full-timers would also act in a developmental role - in interpreting, to assess and orientate new recruits, and in translation -particularly complex business and technical translation - to do the research

and maintain contacts with technical experts and others in the domains of the translation work.

There are changes at the organizational level as well. In 1990 a small group of Victorian private agencies has established an organization to look after collective interests - the Victorian Association of Commercial Language Services. Motivated partly by concerns over policy developments that could threaten private agencies - the development of a National Bureau of Language Services being perceived as one such potential threat - but even more by a sense that private agencies were little considered at all in I/T policy, the formation of this body marks a new step for private agencies in becoming also part of public debate on the field and the profession.

Among concerns of private agencies, was the general reluctance of Australian business to see investment in translation and interpreting as being worthwhile in doing business with overseas interests. All private practitioners interested in the business field have examples of this, where often a reluctance to use language services at all is matched with an extreme suspicion of the product, often for reasons which are difficult to fathom or which are inadequately conveyed back to the I/T agency. We shall forego a listing of the most bizarre reactions here, except to point out that this indicates an area of tremendous public education to be done. In a way, the reluctance of business to affirm the benefit of I/T reflects somewhat older attitudes prevalent some decades ago in the community area towards the benefits of using interpreters (rather than, in the classical examples, the cleaner or a member of the family). It is significant that such attitudes in many community areas have been overcome, and increasing numbers of institutions will now use interpreters as a matter of policy. It is clear such a public education effort is still needed in the area of trade and business. Importantly, private agencies, who otherwise displayed a variety of attitudes towards government and government language services, all did see a vital role for the government in educating business to see the benefits of using language services. This must be a clear priority for the future. While several recent research reports (Stanley et al 1990; Valverde 1990) have pointed to the importance of language in export potential, use of language services by business is still very modest.

The private sector thus remains, curiously, the least

explored though potentially the greatest contibutor to future developments in language services. Certainly, if we are to achieve a viable 'top end' to the profession, argued elsewhere in this report, a great deal of that 'top end' will certainly come in the private market. It is important to note the difficulties with which private agencies had to cope in developing their services so far; interestingly now, for some of the more vigorous agencies that are chasing a broader clientele, there is a very good understanding of the interconnection between language work in community settings and language work for business and commercial opportunities: it is precisely private agencies that have begun to blur this distinction.

4.3. NAATI

After several years of unsteady growth and much criticism in the 1970s, NAATI has grown throughout the 1980s to assume a formidable if still uneasy role within the I/T field. The role of NAATI has been fundamental in the creation of an I/T profession in Australia, as outlined in previous chapters. Its role now includes accrediting candidates directly by testing, recognition of overseas qualifications, and accreditation of courses, advising and lobbying on I/T issues to government and other bodies and watching over standards in I/T, as well as more generally promoting I/T as a public education body.

Perhaps NAATI's greatest achievement has simply been its survival. This is even more unusual in that it has very much had to invent its own role as it went, and had few models from overseas to guide it; indeed, as one of Australia's small contributions to language services around the world, the very fact of such an accreditation body is unique, and made even more singular by consideration of the difficult federal structure in which it has worked, where many accreditation procedures are linked to State powers which can differ around the country.

But beyond its own survival, NAATI has also had conspicuous success in having its accreditation levels recognized as the basis for the future profession, despite historical battles over recognition and disputes over the value of accreditation. It is certainly the case now that NAATI Level 3 is not only recognized in principle as the basic professional level, but that it is increasingly being institutionalized in awards, hiring

procedures, professional association membership and the soon to be introduced legislation on registration. While even a few years ago it was possible to hear complaints from Level 2 practitioners that they were still doing the bulk of interpreting work, and that Level 2 was a quite adequate level of accreditation for the tasks being performed, those voices have been stilled or overridden more recently as most services hasten to have their practitioners accredited at Level 3.

It also must be remembered that such a situation has been brought about remarkably quickly: while complaints of the slowness of professional development abound, it was only in 1980 that NAATI held its first full round of I/T tests, and courses have only been going effectively since 1975. While some of NAATI's earlier objectives - particularly the handing over to a professional body within 5 years - have not been met, and in retrospect seems to have been an overly optimistic term of reference, the achievement of having an accreditation level now widely recognized both within and outside the field, is considerable.

The most important of NAATI's political work in recent years has been firstly getting approval for and fulfilling its 5 year plan, and secondly lobbying for the introduction of registration, which will have considerable success in 1991 when the legislation is expected to be introduced. The 5 year plan, begun in 1987/8 was first of all an attempt to get over the enormous backlog of testing that had dogged NAATI since its inception, with a vast number of candidates waiting to be tested in an enormous range of languages throughout Australia. The aim of the plan was to have an increased injection of funds from State and federal governments in its first years, to get rid of the backlog, then lower the amounts given by the governments as NAATI would be able to handle a normal testing program and earn its income from this by appropriate setting of its own fees. Other aspects of the five year plan including setting up a national professional association, and a registration body for practitioners. Several aspects of this plan have been highly successful, marked by a welcome reduction in the backlog of candidates for testing, and national registration.

At the same time as recognizing its fundamental influence in shaping the present form of the I/T profession, there are however worrying questions about NAATI and the

appropriateness of such a body to continue its functions, or continue them indefinitely in a field that is beginning to change rapidly partly as a result of NAATI's own work. In its testing, in its watchdog and its professional development roles, NAATI has now come under closer scrutiny. This issue will be examined in the next chapter.

4.4. Interpreting/translating courses

The past decade in I/T courses could be seen as one of rise and then - alarmingly - fall. Over the late 1970s to early 1980s, courses were developed in all States and Territories except Tasmania, with Level 3 courses at one time in W.A., S.A., A.C.T, Queensland, N.S.W.and Victoria, and Level 2 courses there and in N.T. as well. At Level 3, the original A.C.T. course lasted only a few years, but the greatest decline has come in the last couple of years, when the W.A. course has folded and the S.A. course is winding down and not having new intakes. This leaves the Victorian course (at Victoria College) and the N.S.W. course at the University of Western Sydney (formerly Macarthur) as the only two viable Level 3 courses. There is one Level 4 course, in Japanese, at the University of Queensland, a notable addition to the courses, and one which, despite relatively low student numbers, indicates the potential for high level courses in this field in Australia.

The situation with Level 2 courses shows marked discrepancies across the country, with a few very strong courses covering an increasingly wider range of languages in Melbourne and Sydney, joined recently by a new course in the ACT, but severe problems with Level 2 courses elsewhere. There have been problems with sustaining a Level 2 course in Aboriginal languages in the N.T., smaller regional courses (eg in Newcastle) have ceased, and again Level 2 courses have contracted to the main South-Eastern States, with the courses in W.A. and Queensland having a precarious existence.

Meanwhile, within the existing courses, there continue to be problems associated with student numbers, teaching materials and relations to NAATI tests, issues that are discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

NAATI has exercised its accreditation and watchdog functions through its education committees, currently the

Qualifications and Assessment Advisory Committee (QAAC), which accredits and reaccredits courses, and has been active in upgrading demands courses have to satisfy to be or remain accredited. From the early years of having extremely different looking courses offering Level 2, a uniformity has emerged of one-year part-time TAFE Certificate courses now offering Level 2. At Level 3, there was always greater uniformity, though the West Sydney course, where I/T is studied not in a course of its own but as part of broader studies with various options, has had more difficulties reaching NAATI standards on several aspects of the course.

At present, NAATI has not responded in any major way to the decline of courses, but as the accreditation body it is hamstrung in that it is dependent upon educators themselves to plan and initiate courses. NAATI's broadest function here has been to set overall principles of development. These have included a stated concern to have Colleges increase the number of languages they offer, and:

> "To discourage the proliferation of Level 3 courses.
>
> To discourage the incorporation of interpreting/ translating courses into existing language courses
>
> To discourage the teaching of Level 4 courses together with Level 3 courses. Institutions should not assume ipso facto that progression to Level 4 is logical and automatic.
>
> To urge the establishment of only one, or at most two, Level 4 centres throughout Australia; one for European languages, the other for Asian languages"
>
> (Ingleson:160)

It also wants to encourage Level 3 courses in those States and Territories where they do not or no longer exist, and encourages the setting up of shorter Graduate Diploma courses, as opposed to the 3 year undergraduate B.A.(I/T) course which has been the standard course. It should be said that it has clearly been difficult to fulfil these objectives.

At Level 3, there has not been development of Graduate Diploma courses except at Victoria College, and likewise except for Victoria College there has not been an increase in the

number of languages on offer. Regarding Level 4, it is not clear exactly why the distinction between *languages* at Level 4 should be relevant to *I/T* courses. Even recognizing the work at the University of Queensland in pioneering a Level 4 course (and it would be senseless at this stage to try to duplicate Japanese at Level 4), it remains a question as to where other Level 4 courses should be. In some cases and for some languages, Queensland may be far from other major population centres which could supply candidates, in a country that often remains doggedly fixed to State boundaries. Indeed, with the general decline of courses, and related developments, NAATI's own principles of how and where courses should develop seem themselves now very shaky. These issues are taken up again in the next chapter.

4.5. The profession - AUSIT

A notable milestone was reached in 1987 with the creation, under the auspices of NAATI, of a national professional body in I/T. Finally emerging as AUSIT -the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators - it fulfilled a vision that went back to the founding of NAATI of having a national professional body take over major accreditation and other professional functions from NAATI (then envisaged as being able to take place within 5 years).

In the short time that has elapsed, AUSIT has fought to establish itself firstly among practitioners in the field, and secondly to establish itself more broadly as a viable representative body which *could* assume some of the functions rather easily imagined for it more than a decade ago. The convincing of practitioners has not been easy. In some States, existing professional organizations were careful of immediately ceasing their own independent activities and having their members join AUSIT. In the last three years, however, this has largely been overcome. A more serious problem is that in many places, practitioners (particularly those employed full-time in the public sector) were already members in a variety of other industrial organizations, and were sceptical of what the new professional body could do for them. With AUSIT setting down guidelines that Ordinary Members must be NAATI Level 3 or equivalent, non-"Ordinary" members have at times felt the organization is not for them. There seem to be important variations around the

nation in membership rates, with overall AUSIT having a harder time in NSW than Victoria in attracting members. Still, membership now stands at nearly 700.

Equally difficult and time-consuming has been the attempt to gain broader recognition in the field of I/T, with NAATI seeming in no hurry to divest any of its activities to AUSIT, and AUSIT having to battle to get recognition for itself from policy-making bodies and services who have not been used to dealing with any professional body in the field, and who are still not sure of AUSIT's exact industrial and professional role. AUSIT has now produced a professional journal and in lobbying terms has been very active on the registration issue, but its largely part-time officers have struggled to have a major impact in policy terms. Given the historical circumstances of I/T development in Australia, AUSIT now reveals those historical influences only too well: even in the larger States, there are few I/T practitioners who are also competent organizers or lobbyists, and the industrial past of I/T practitioners has rarely trained them for such roles. The continuing attempt to increase AUSIT's ability to influence policy and become a major player in the I/T field will be of the utmost importance to I/T in the coming years.

CHAPTER 5

POLICY ISSUES IN INTERPRETING/ TRANSLATING

This chapter surveys the policy issue that have begun to be identified by our historical account and the description of the key features of interpreting/translating today. In the next chapter specific points that may relate to the work of the NLIA will be outlined.

5.1. The organization of language services

Debate over language services in recent months has become so heightened, and events are moving so rapidly that it would be out of of place here to make firm predictions of future events or categorical assertions of what must be done. The current period is one of considerable turmoil in language services, but it remains an open question to what extent the historical pattern of development of services outlined earlier will radically change in the near future.

A measure of the extent of turmoil is the row over Commonwealth cost-recovery measures of TIS. The principal researcher spoke to many language service officers as this issue bubbled up in late 1990 and early 1991, particularly in relations between the Commonwealth and Victoria. The facts are relatively simple to recount: since 1986, the Commonwealth has been reviewing its responsibilities for settlement services and wanting to distribute responsibility for language services in DILGEA to user departments and bodies. It began talks on this with the State governments and over the last few years a number of agreements have been reached that there would be cost-recovery, on a sliding scale at first, for TIS. At times the States have begged for more time and questioned details, but basic agreement

was reached, and States agreed to make suitable arrangements with their relevant user bodies. Cost recovery would be initiated on January 1, 1991. Yet it was only in November and December 1990 that a number of organizations (particularly in Victoria) heard for the first time from their relevant State departments and organizations that cost recovery would affect them and they needed to make budget provision! In a whirlwind of claims and counter-claims, State, users bodies and Commonwealth government all claimed they had done the right things by the agreements, and pointed fingers at one another in the press and in government circles. For a student of federalism, it was marvellous grist to the mill, a typical federalist snafu of obligations assumed or denied. To the student of language services, however, it was extremely alarming, but also revealing: it showed the depth of passion that there were for this issue among those in language services and users, and the concern that cost recovery may have deleterious effects on users who may - for cost reasons - be content with alternatives to professional services. The Peat Marwick report had described the strength of these feelings through 1989, and in late 1990 they seemed just as strong. The issue of access and rights to services is still very much to the fore in discussions of language services, even though a newer discourse of efficiency and rationalization is increasingly heard.

Very much linked to the issue of cost recovery - which presumably will be introduced and accepted even by an unwilling Victoria, is the broader promise made by the Hawke government in the 1990 election of a National Bureau of Language Services. Just what such a bureau would look like remains difficult to forecast, but again this move has historical roots in the Commonwealth reviewing its responsibilities in language services, and particularly looking at the diversity and seeming overlap of services, State and Commonwealth, in very different combinations across Australia.

This move has several broad thrusts: most fundamentally, the Commonwealth's clear move into cost-recovery and explicit reference to cost savings through consolidating language services are attempts to save Commonwealth money. While not understandable outside present complexities of federal relations, it does signal that on many fronts the Commonwealth is likely to retreat from programs unless they can in some way relieve

the necessity to pay cost-sharing money to States, or in other ways pay their way. In this way, the promise of establishing a national bureau while aggressively covering costs and cutting commitments brings us to the politically exquisite coincidence of a much touted election promise of broad social benefit, with real savings in (federal) government expenditure.

Apart for the issue of costs, however, there are two related but analytically different thrusts to the push for rationalized services. One, as exemplified by the Peat Marwick report of 1990, was a largely managerial approach to language services, attempting to address issues of role and professional development and quality of service, but in the main asserting overlaps, duplication and inefficiency of resources. As pointed out in the previous chapter, the relations particularly between TIS and State language services are uneven and seemingly uncoordinated, TIS at times being a prime service provider and at other times a back-up, and with differences in issues such as recruitment standards, method of access or even, in the era of user-pays, cost.

It should be said immediately that while many of the issues identified in the Peat Marwick report would as a description of problems find wide agreement among those in language services or their users, many other assumptions can be seriously questioned. Above all, the issue of overlap and duplication is an extremely complex one, involving issues of role and expertise that the Peat Marwick Report was not always able to understand very well. One small example here: while TIS certainly seems to act as a 'backup' service, the reasons and the ways it does this are much more complex that a mere assertion of duplication: a specialized interpreting agency, say specifically serving the legal or health or mental health area, may have very specific criteria in the kinds of practitioners it wants (in terms of training or accreditation or any other factor), but may find that in some languages, practitioners with such qualifications are not available, or at a particular time, they may need to go outside their own panel; often these constraints on agencies other than TIS are financial, and for a variety of reasons they will use TIS as a last resort. At the same time, the reasons why they are reluctant to use TIS on-site services are precisely the problems of training and competence in often specialized areas which marks TIS because they, comparatively,

have never had the resources to equip their staff for the varying demands made on them (this is not to suggest that TIS staff are not competent in any specific situation, but the lack of training is an issue for the whole service).

Thus, lack of resources plagues *both* State and specialized services *and* TIS. But the issue is not one of duplication: specialist services know when to use TIS: their firm rule, for all the reasons mentioned above, is to *call TIS last*. At the same time, TIS is advertised and constantly referred to, even by all other agencies, precisely because of its accessibility by phone; indeed, one factor in TIS' general increase of business and calls is not only its own publicity actions but also all the activities to stimulate demand and to raise awareness of language services generally by all the other services; it is unlikely, without the activities of these agencies, that TIS would have its present high workload. Finally, it is important to point out that not only are other language services selective about using TIS, so are users: defending the TIS cost-recovery program in response to Victorian objections to paying for TIS in the health field, a DILGEA spokesman pointed out that in that State only 10% of the health interpreter needs in that State were covered by TIS; clearly, even users in the health system were aware that other services were available (Sunday Age:17.2.91).

Issues of duplication are complex, and may reveal not duplication but actually quite efficient use of available resources, including a weighing up of the quality provided by the various services. The Marwick report, for all its managerial zeal to provide a service that was on paper not duplicatory, underestimated what were the implications of providing a truly non-duplicatory system faced with such diverse demands. Perhaps even worse, in an attempt to emphasize its case it made a quite puzzling monetary estimate of the savings incurred by overcoming duplication:

> "It has been estimated that approximately 30% or seven million dollars in 1989 figures could be saved and redirected into wider facilities if the existing service delivery mechanisms were rationalised."
>
> (Ibid:61).

Curiously, in the report, this "estimate" is nowhere

explained. It is difficult to see what its basis could be. Even under the most sympathetic of approaches to possible costing, it is not possible to envisage such a saving. If anything like the same level of service is provided as happens at the moment, much the same interpreters will be going out to do roughly the same jobs they perform now.

A good deal of the report's attention is devoted to the duplication of administrative structures, where different structures may be sending interpreters form the same pool to very similar situations. While several services do indeed have administrative structures of their own, these are usually minute, rarely consisting of more than a small number of booking clerks and a possible shared accountant, with a tiny management team; in some other cases there are training officers or similar positions. Under any rationalized scheme, it may be possible to envisage the consolidated central structure (based say on TIS) being able to do bookings, but if this took on the volume of work from the other agencies it would have to increase its own booking staff. Moreover, if *training* was an issue seriously addressed in a new rationalized service (and this is already very much needed for present TIS interpreters), then in fact training positions would probably increase in numbers. A larger rationalized structure would also need more management itself... The argument over cost saving does not seem realistic: it may be possible to argue about a few booking clerk positions and (possibly) a few managers; we are not arguing about seven million dollars. Even in its own terms, the "redirected" money argument seems poor: cost saving (for the Commonwealth) is certainly a large incentive for pushing ahead with the bureau and with cost recovery; if the alchemic seven million were to materialize, they could be destined for consolidated revenue rather than to language services.

The second impetus to look seriously at a national service however has quite a different orientation, though it often travels along with the rationalization/"let's clear up the duplication" stream: it is well exemplified in the paper of Jean Shannon, a DILGEA officer and member of the language services task force looking at a national bureau, that she delivered at AACLAME's 'Language is Good Business' conference in 1990. Essentially, Shannon saw a national bureau as a circuit-breaker: a circuit-breaker precisely for the historical vicious circle that

has bedevilled I/T services and indeed the whole profession, of poor esteem begetting low self-esteem on the part of practitioners begetting low commitment to the profession begetting lack of professional development begetting poor professional status and remuneration begetting poor esteem...

> " The TIS service was created in the spirit of a voluntary organisation to meet an immediate "welfare need". As such, the culture within the organization as well as the pervading attitude of many of our contract staff is one of altruism...[but] the continuance along a "charity" mentality has done nothing for the growth of the service, its efficiency or the enhancement of the profession." (Shannon 1990:2)

The example she gives of the vicious circle is why interpreters do not command a decent return for their service:

> " the excuses are:
>
> (a) there isn't enough money in the barrel because
>
> (b) we can't charge clients because it will be a disincentive to use the services so
>
> (c) interpreters don't/can't ask for more because
>
> (d) they know there's only so much money in the barrel and
>
> (e) they believe that they won't get the work because clients won't pay"
>
> (Ibid).

This is the vicious circle to be broken. In particular, the nature of the field has led to constant turnover in practitioners and constant training of new staff for short tenure. A real profession has not evolved, nor are practitioners paid what they are worth.

Shannon's passionate analysis of the field points to crucial links between professional aspects and organizational integrity. Of particular concern is the part-time nature of the whole field, where part-timers (pensioners, students, housewives) are often

the practitioners, a clear concern also of the professional body AUSIT. Shannon sees it necessary to build structures that can give careers to full-time, committed practitioners, who would be committed to a service selling itself to the community and expanding its body of clients.

Shannon's remarks were made primarily within the context of DILGEA, and the shortcomings of a service that are widely recognized. It is important here to understand how services can improve and what are the criteria of such improvement: one aspect which needs to be added to Shannon's argument is that in fact some language services, and parts of many language services, have in fact found it possible to already start breaking some of the circuits Shannon has identified. It would be a mistake to see all language services as sharing exactly the same problems of TIS, and certainly some of the specialized services or EAC services have provided an incentive to their staff to be full-time, to develop their expertise and to show the commitment Shannon asks for. Within TIS itself in different offices around the country, there have been varied approaches to solving these problems, even before the Marwick report.

The point here is that in considering any unified service or much more highly co-ordinated service, there must not be situations where good practice - whether at State or federal level - is discarded because it does not fit neatly into a particular rationalized organizational model. Some learning from specialized services, allied to the very accurate analysis of TIS, is needed.

The model proposed by the Marwick report was couched rather vaguely as a "staged implementation of a rationalised service provision complementary with State facilities", which would gain an increasing national focus and with all services being driven by a standard ethos of fee for service and clear stress on efficiency. Shannon speaks of a "consolidated" model with State and specialized services retaining an identity and indeed their particular approaches having a greater possibility of flourishing because of greater resources being available in a consolidated system.

It is significant that in terms of these attempts to rationalize services, translation does seem to be an easier area to tackle than interpreting. The Peat Marwick report itself comments that with translation there was considerable unity of purpose

among service providers, recognition of the benefits of working closely together, awareness of common technology issues and so on. Unfortunately, the report then jumps to the conclusion that, because there was greater resistance to any notion of a centralized or unified system of interpreting, this was somehow an irrational response on the part of (State) services. Yet,as our survey shows, there are issues of interpreting that are indeed complex, arising from the nature of the field itself, that do not lend themselves to easy organizational solutions.

From the perspective of this report, it essential that in whatever reorganization takes place, certain fundamental principles of language service provision, and of integrity of language perspectives, are retained. Shannon leans in this direction when she argues against the previous welfarist approach of DILGEA language services:

> "If we focus on migrant needs and not the language needs of Australia, we will become marginalized in the new 'pragmatic' era."
>
> (Ibid:5)

This distinction, and the necessity to indeed focus more clearly on language issues is strongly endorsed by this present report (as it is by the more far-sighted and professional language services we have discussed). The focus on language makes it possible to enumerate the principles that should govern the organization of language services:

1 Australian language services are now fundamentally based upon a view of rights to language services, rights that do not necessarily involve a welfare mentality, any more than they do in the law or elsewhere.

2 The principle that major users of language services should bear responsibility (financial but also other responsibilities eg assessing need) appears to be more and more clearly established (with the corollary that the NESB client in any situation in the public sector should not pay for language services).

3 That part of ensuring language services involves ensuring their quality, through monitoring of standards, accreditation and training.

4 That quality comes through familiarity of practitioners with the areas in which they work and the specialized challenges different demands make of practitioners. Practitioners who work in areas providing specialized services must be trained for and equipped to satisfactorily meet the demands placed upon their I/T skills, over and above their general professional level of accreditation.

5 That preparation of I/T practitioners must be matched by user education and professional liaison with significant user groups, particularly in specialized and highly demanding areas, both for educational reasons, and more generally to raise the corporate image of I/T among other user groups.

6 That language services as professional services are a resource to the institution, and to the wider purposes of government in communication both within Australia and overseas.

The conscious promotion of these principles in Australia means that in many ways we have built in a comprehensiveness that can be an important model for others to follow. On the point of access, for example, in Australia there is concern that access be to services staffed by well qualified personnel; this can be contrasted to a view pronounced in some parts of the United States in relation to court interpreters that, as the provision of interpreting was itself seen as a significant employer of minority groups, there would be little stress on strict accreditation procedures, so that minority members would find it easier to get work as interpreters - an argument that turns notions of access on their head (United States... 1986:40). Many countries are now grappling with ensuring effective services and quality practice in areas of community interpreting (for the United States seen Arjona 1983; for Britain see Shackman 1984, Corsellis 1988; for Germany see Driesen 1988).

The principles enunciated here need to be the necessary underpinning of the organization of language services. These principles of course are to do with the nature of interpreting and translating, their focus and quality. Many attempted reorganizations of I/T services, as this report has argued, find it difficult to confront these fundamental issues in the field,

preferring to remain within managerial considerations alone. Yet it must be good I/T practice - of which no one service or organization has a monopoly - that must guide organizational structures. We are still awaiting enunciations of good practice in the documents surveyed here.

It seems important also to ensure that whatever language service materialized from bureau discussions, is *not* exclusively or even predominantly a service that simply duplicates other private services. This is not because of a concern that some private practitioners have that such a lean and business-oriented agency funded by public funds would unfairly compete with the private sector (this is not to dismiss concerns over subsidisation). Most fundamentally, however, it is because a purely self-financing body would indeed be much more concerned with manipulating its own services to reflect areas of profitability. Important principles of access and of institutional responsibility for language services should be built into any structure, which would be much better envisaged as a statutory authority or a government business with legislated access and equity criteria than a freelancer in the market. As we shall see, the one formerly government body that is now incorporated as a private company, NAATI, has run into enormous difficulties and distortion of its objectives because it now has to earn an increasingly large amount of its own keep. Even the notable improvement in some areas of DILGEA's language services over the past year shows this is not impossible to achieve in a service oriented heavily still towards access principles.

5.2. NAATI

In describing NAATI's recent functioning in Chapter 4, it was mentioned that in its testing, its watchdog and its professional development functions, NAATI's role can be seriously questioned.

To some extent, NAATI shows the signs of an organization now needing to run certain activities to remain alive, that is, spend a good deal of time on activities designed to perpetuate it as an organization. For example, one of the main purposes of testing now, particularly in the larger, already well catered for languages, is simply for revenue. While in rarer languages (and in some States or Territories in particular), there will continue to be a role for testing candidates for a considerable period of

time to come, the self-serving nature of testing in large languages, where all committed candidates and practitioners have long since been accredited, and newer candidates are doing courses, must cause worry.

More fundamentally still, in its other activities besides testing, NAATI struggles to find a clear role for itself. It has an uneasy relationship with courses, and seems to have little answer to the present decline in the number of courses particularly at Level 3. It also seems to be little involved in wider issues of industry training, or moves in language service restructuring: its contribution here has been to largely reiterate the importance of appointing NAATI accredited people a battle now largely won and indeed transcended in some cases. To be fair to NAATI, it does have restricted resources, and its emphasis on registration over the past few years is certainly the correct one. The problem, however, is that NAATI is now seen by government and other bodies as the authoritative body in I/T. It is certainly true that, of the moment, there is no other, but NAATI's way of representing itself can be usefully scrutinized.

One example here is, again referring to testing, how NAATI has publicly pushed its own empire of testing in contexts where it is asked as an authoritative body in I/T to speak for the field. The Asian Studies Council's study of *Asia in Australian Higher Education* (1989) (the Ingleson Report) devoted some attention to I/T in Asian languages. While in its survey period contacting many institutions in I/T education, the final report almost exclusively reported only the views of two institutions - Peter Davidson of the University of Queensland (head of the only Level 4 training course in Australia), and NAATI. NAATI seemed to carry a great deal of sway with Ingleson, its work being strongly supported - not unusual or out of place in such a report. But NAATI clearly had ambitions of what the report could do for it. In the report, rather out of the blue, come recommendations that NAATI could in fact expand its testing role in higher education, and could indeed become the body determining levels of foreign language proficiency: the Report's Recommendation 50 was

> "We recommend an expansion of the role of NAATI to include a National Languages Testing Unit..." (Ibid:255).

The fur tions of such a Unit would include:

"* the development of language proficiency levels which build on the ALL [Australian Language Levels] project and complement the NAATI interpreting/translating levels of proficiency. Yardsticks for the measurement of the various levels of communicative and linguistic skills should be established, in consultation with tertiary language teachers and relevant language associations. These yardsticks should then be applied against current offerings to determine the current Australian situation and to ascertain where changes in emphasis need to be made.

...* compilation of registers of people qualified as: teachers of low demand languages; interpreters and translators (with their levels of proficiency). These registers should be made easily accessible to inquirers from industry, commerce and government."

(Ibid: 254)

While the point on registers seems unexceptional (and in the case of I/T is already available in the NAATI directory), the idea of a languages testing unit within NAATI places this organization within an entirely new range of activities, and recommendation 53 reveals the extent of NAATI's envisaged domain:

"We recommend that higher education institutions be encouraged to review and self-assess all language teaching programs on a regular basis, in cooperation with NAATI..."

(Ibid:255).

It is extraordinary to find in a supposedly authoritative report, and one that elsewhere says much that is useful about both language study and interpreting/translating, that at this point there is such a fundamental confusion of what NAATI's

role is, or can be imagined to be, what interpreting/translating testing is, and what languages testing more broadly is, not to mention reviews and self-assessments of "all language teaching programs". To see NAATI as having a role in such an enterprise is simply wilful contravention of the long-established fact that interpreting/translating is *not* simply speaking two languages, and I/T testing is *not* simply testing two languages. The belief that somehow NAATI's testing panels extend their work into foreign language *teaching* is naive, and a radical departure from what those panels were meant to do.

The whole thrust of analysis of this report, and of so much other recent work in I/T has been to more clearly define the nature, objectives and functions of I/T, which often means delineating the field from other aspects of languages and language work. NAATI needs to keep this in mind, or it may well become irrelevant to the field of I/T - its primary field of responsibility. It is curious also why NAATI would be seen as a broad language tester when it has a very good product to sell itself - its expertise in I/T tests, which is now considerable and which it has indeed turned to profit, currently successfully selling its services to I/T in New Zealand. Further issues relating to testing are discussed under the section on Testing and Courses below.

Part of the problems for NAATI in charting its way is the low level of professional help it can rely upon. It has a small board, few of whose members are widely familiar with issues in language policy and the sophisticated way in which language issues are now debated in other areas. The lack of good professional advice from outside also reflects the situation that there is still little substantial research in the area, and few who could give such advice in an authoritative way. The field still lacks a 'top end' in both practitioners *and* in researchers and policy experts. Some possible implications of this for the NLIA are discussed in the next chapter.

Two other issues need to be briefly mentioned in relation to NAATI:

- the question of levels
- professional development and representation issues

The question of the appropriateness of the NAATI levels, established since the start of NAATI, becomes an issue because

of the marked change to the profession in recent years. The most important development here is the clear drive for Level 3 as the demanded level for I/T practitioners. While there are still many Level 2 interpreters employed, and in some languages this is likely to continue to be the case for some time, the push for Level 3 now does raise questions about what the lower levels (particularly Level 2) should be. Level 2 has always been in the anomalous situation of being *both* a level of I/T *and* a level of advanced language aide, and Level 2 (and 1) tests are used as the LAPA standards (LAPA is currently under review); at Level 2, what is basically an interpreting test is used (perhaps primarily now) as a test for bilingual officers. Likewise, with Level 2 courses, in most instances the students are not envisaging a career of I/T for themselves, but rather training for being effective bilingual officers and the like. From one perspective, this is a technical matter of testing and courses, which applied linguists may have views about. But more fundamentally, it is a crucial issue for NAATI as to whether it concentrates attention on I/T alone, or is happy with its traditional function of dealing with both I/T and bilingual officer issues. A discussion of levels (concentrating on Levels 2 and 1) could have far reaching implications for NAATI's future. Against this, there is a considered view that the system of Levels has hardly had time to sink into professional consciousness, and must be maintained for some time before it is in any way redefined. This issue is worthy of further debate.

Finally, the issue of professional development and representation. While in the initial terms of reference of NAATI the formation of a professional body would lead to the 'withering away' of NAATI as its functions and regulatory mechanisms would be replaced by those of the profession, in fact it is clear that the advent of a national professional body will not lead to NAATI vacating the important field of offering policy advice on I/T developments and being a watchdog over I/T issues. As this report has argued, NAATI's advice in the past has ranged from the sensible and constructive to the somewhat puzzling. For the present, however, it is clear that NAATI is *the* authoritative body that will be consulted (if any is) in the formulation of policy and the restructuring of present practices. This makes it doubly important for NAATI itself to have good professional advice, but it also makes it clear that if anyone else is to gain something of

the attention and respect that NAATI is accorded, that attention and respect will not be given easily but will have to be earned by a superior insight into and connection with I/T than NAATI has, or, in the case of the profession, by a better representative base. It cannot be stressed too much how important is the ability to be seen and to make submissions to a whole host of levels of government and private initiatives, reviews, investigations, reform proposals and accountability measures. NAATI will not give up its pre-eminence lightly in this field, and there is no reason for it to do so unless and until other bodies in the field can start to speak with a clearer and more informed voice. To examine this issue further we need to look at problems confronting the current profession.

5.3. The profession

Whatever difficulties NAATI labours under, it can look back upon over a decade of significant, if not always rapid and unquestioned achievements. For the national professional body AUSIT, however, the first three years of existence have brought very modest rewards in terms of having a national professional body respected and supported by the profession, or recognized by the wider professional and institutional domain.

AUSIT now has nearly 700 members, a significant figure if the relatively small size of the total practitioner field is considered. Yet it faces significant problems in providing its members with the services, activity and representational presence that was so earnestly hoped for at its inception. In many ways, the first few years of AUSIT were very like the first few years of NAATI itself, when it faced a field that was variously sympathetic or hostile, and its own very low resource levels prevented it from being able to devote the kind of full-time attention to issues its charter demanded. At the present moment, AUSIT has to survive off members fees which are only $50 per annum for Ordinary Members - a ludicrously small amount in comparison with any other viable professional body. In the past few years it has virtually been saved only by significant injections of funds from NAATI and the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission. With such low levels of resources, AUSIT's main preoccupation continues to be its own survival, with it being able to offer few tangible incentives except to look hopefully

towards a measure of professional strength in the future - luckily, there are at the moment enough I/T practitioners to support such a vision.

The organization can point to some achievements - the production of a professional journal starting in 1990, membership of FIT (International Federation of Translators) and some degree of activism on a number of issues including registration and, to a much lesser extent, language service restructuring. The issue of registration is of particular importance to the profession, going to the heart of many issues including widespread use of unaccredited practitioners, lack of career structure, proper rates of remuneration, and so many more. On an issue like registration too, the clear differences between a representative body such as AUSIT and NAATI begin to emerge.

Registration has long been proposed as a means of regulating the profession and ensuring minimum standards. The method of registration finally agreed to by the federal government was a non-exclusionary, i.e. voluntary registration, leaving it open for non-registered practitioners to continue working, and building the system upon persuasion and the public encouragement and promotion of registration. It was widely argued that any exclusionary system such as licensing was inappropriate, with insufficient numbers of accredited personnel leading to an inevitable use of unlicensed practitioners, undermining the very basis of a licensing system. AUSIT argued strongly for an exclusionary registration, with one-off exemptions for cases of having to use inadequately accredited staff in rarer languages. This view was not accepted, and the legislation to be introduced expectedly in 1991 will provide for non-exclusionary registration. NAATI was given the task of drawing up a draft bill, and devoted considerable resources over 1989-90 to accomplish this task, a measure of NAATI's standing in the field. AUSIT to an extent remains on the outside; it agrees that even non-exclusionary legislation is a step forward, and will work to tighten the working of the system through regulations, but the weak state of the profession means AUSIT is unlikely to be the determining voice on the control of the profession.

On this issue, it is important to understand that there are other methods, besides registration, to ensure some degree of control over the profession and the use of unaccredited

practitioners. One, referred to several times already, is industrial means, and particularly working through award structures - an avenue that will begin to have an effect even in places like hospitals, long considered among the more recalcitrant institutions in terms of qualifications of interpreters. The industrial dimension is a crucial one in this field, as in so many others in Australian life; at the moment, AUSIT's industrial muscle is weak, but perhaps here it has something to learn from other language professional groups who also in the past have had unsatisfactory industrial status - ESL teachers being the most obvious example.

The other avenue towards control of the profession is through legislation - not only registration legislation, but legislation in the substantive areas of I/T work. Interesting here, the legal area itself leads the way. In the comprehensive survey of the Attorney-General Department's *Access to interpreters in the Australian legal system* (1990), the issue of using accredited personnel was clearly related to the much broader issue of ensuring that the legal system, and the various parts of it, used interpreters at all. The report observed that legislation (particularly in Victoria and South Australia) now stipulates the necessity of using interpreters in particular circumstances, for example criminal investigation procedures. Significantly here, Commonwealth legislation itself was rather behind, as a result of difficulties in having key law reform legislation being passed by Parliament. Importantly, some of the legislation stipulated the use of "competent" interpreters, a term left undefined but one which gives a basis for future refinement through regulations or, rather more unlikely, case law.

The final pressure that will enforce standards is the increasing stipulation by language service agencies - without necessarily any legislative or industrial compulsion, to make Level 3 the required minimum standard (in languages where it is available). These moves combined will all assist the tightening of criteria on practitioners; for the rest, the profession will itself still have a role to play in bringing an understanding of professional standards to users and the wider public.

Industrial issues relating to this field are for AUSIT to solve itself. In the wider area of professional development and promotional work, however, AUSIT would clearly benefit from

outside interest and outside support from other institutions concerned with language policy. Possible avenues of work for the NLIA in this regard will be explored in the next chapter.

5.4. Providing a 'top end' to the profession

> "My colleague and I were engaged to interpret for a meeting between the Australian Prime Minister and a senior French statesman. It was a meeting around a table of the two delegations, and we proceeded in the normal way, working both sides of the table in 30 minute blocks or so, in turn interpreting and then helping out our colleague who took over. Things went smoothly. As we proceeded, however, I noticed a young lady who sat right next to the Prime Minister, and who kept looking at us the whole way through the proceedings. I thought she must be a very important adviser indeed to the Prime Minister, because all through the meeting she did not make any contribution at all to the discussion. At a break in the meeting, I was surprised when she spoke to us: she expressed admiration for what we had been doing, and it transpired why she was at the meeting, and why she had been watching us so intently. It turned out that she was an officer in Foreign Affairs, and the previous day at 4pm a call had come through to her section, asking her to come to the meeting as the Prime Minister's interpreter: she had been stationed in France, and she spoke some French. As she explained to us: "I can order in a restaurant, and ask my way, but I can't do what you're doing!" She was more than happy to leave the interpreting to us. We had been engaged by the French side."
>
> (AIIC Interpreter, NAATI Level V)

This incident, recounted at the CITEAA Conference in Canberra in

October 1989, illustrates the extent to which uncertainty over I/T in Australia is not confined to the areas of migrant and community concerns, but seems to be very evident in all of

Australia's dealings with other languages and cultures. Many of the attitudes of three decades ago described by Kerr (1988) continue to be found. Indeed, considering the continuous raising of consciousness of these issues among many of the community-oriented professions in Australia, it is now clearly the areas of external affairs, trade and international business that demonstrate critical shortcomings in understanding language issues.

For the Foreign Affairs officials concerned with the international meeting described above, the need to have anyone there with any language capacity at all was a last-minute decision, and overall a low priority. The AIIC interpreters in Australia report that they are rarely if ever engaged by the Australian side in such situations, but almost always by the other side, who are much clearer in their understanding of interpreting and of the quality of interpreting expected. Also, from the Australian side there is little understanding of the other benefits that can come to a delegation from having one's own interpreter, issues discussed earlier in this report when discussing professional role. For such an incident still to happen recently is also an ironic commentary on Foreign Affairs' considerable efforts particularly over the last two decades to raise the language capacity of its own service: such efforts will not be complete until they have percolated to the politicians, ministers and heads of departments.

For the interpreting profession, however, despite the difficulties of the international-oriented market, there has been considerable development at the higher echelons. As described in the previous chapter, AIIC interpreters are now active in Australia not only in the increasing numbers of international conferences and business meetings, but have also become active in the wider interpreting field, as practitioners in local settings (particularly in the legal area) and also in advisory capacities (both to NAATI and the emerging profession in Australia). They are now very importantly setting a lead in terms of standards and in some cases industrial issues. As interpreters coming out of the community-oriented background in Australia begin to match these standards and increasingly work across the spectrum of interpreting settings, there is potential for the profession to develop a top that will act as a real incentive for good practitioners to stay in the field and develop their skills for

all the available markets.

However, at the moment there is considerable mismatch between the potential for interpreting in Australia and its active utilization by those with seemingly most to gain from effective international communication, and attitudes towards interpreting on the part of external-oriented organizations need to be reformed at the very highest levels. In terms of public education on I/T issues, these should be as much directed towards internationally-oriented situations as the more common Australian internal situations. The current situation is also a salutary reminder that the position of I/T and the I/T profession in Australia is not only a reflection of attitudes towards migrants and consequent low status of the practitioners; far more fundamental orientations of Australian political and business institutions towards other cultures are revealed, with worrying consequences not only for the I/T profession.

5.5. Testing and courses

The recent serious falling away of training programs, and continuing problems over the NAATI testing program, represent two critical and very much related issues for NAATI, for training institutions and for the whole field of I/T. The decline of programs outlined earlier, particularly at Level 3, has serious repercussions, and shows how distant is the oft-stated NAATI perspective that courses at Level 3 should become the normal and preferred method of entry into the profession. At the same time, NAATI's reliance on the testing program for income and hence financial survival is a powerful factor acting to also undermine courses.

We have already pointed to several problems in NAATI testing -particularly standards across languages or even within the same language in different locations, problems over the dual nature of Level 2 tests, and problems of a clear focus on I/T testing as against broader language testing. Perhaps even more fundamental problems attend the NAATI testing program, however. It was a surprise in talking to practitioners and others in language services to discover the depth of feeling that still exists about NAATI testing. One of the more serious concerns - paradoxically is precisely the involvement of members of the profession directly in testing: one Sydney private agency head

referred to the unease with which one watched a testing panel in fact test those who could end up being the future competition to the testers, and the problems of impartiality and conflict of interests this brought about - a situation of potential corruption not in any simple way, but in long-term perspectives on desirable competition or threat. For this practitioner, the issue of testing should be put beyond the reach of any such allegations, and should be done by those who were experts in testing without any hint of personal self-interest: university staff, those for whom testing in I/T was their professional work. For others interviewed, NAATI's large testing program seemed incoherent if it was pursued in languages being taught in courses, and there was much agreement that if the same languages were tested by NAATI as were taught in courses, those who ran the courses should be the testers.

The problems the profession has in participating in the testing program however do not stop just with allegations of self-interest. Again, it must be stressed that I/T testing is a particular kind of testing that cannot be undertaken without proper I/T perspectives. This issue is particularly pertinent to interpreting testing: in regards to translation, there has always been less controversy over the test, over standards or over methodology. In interpreting on the other hand, arising directly out of the pattern of historical growth of this field in Australia, a number of confused perspectives have been apparent even among the testers. This may sound surprising, but NAATI itself has had continual problems in assembling their testing panels in interpreting to have the examiners actually understand the nature of the exercise to be assessed.

Thus, in looking for members of testing panels in interpreting, NAATI received such curious responses as people who agreed to test interpreting provided they could get a copy of the original written scripts spoken in each language, and a written copy of what the candidate (interpreter) had rendered - in effect turning an interpreting exercise into a translation exercise; in reality being either unfamiliar with or totally unable to make judgements in interpreting. The persistence of using tapes, particularly for the dialogue interpreting, continues to cause misperceptions of the testing purposes and the judgements associated with testing interpreting performance. While many testing panels have built up their competence in

this area and form much of the basis of NAATI's technical expertise, the wider issues related to testing still remain. Clearly, on some testing issues there could be some deeper role for the NLIA, if in turn it was willing to undertake the task of coming to grips with the particularities of interpreting testing - something which will not be easy, even for linguists proficient at testing other aspects of language, an issue we will return to in the next chapter.

Moving from testing to courses, the mood changes from concern to alarm. The decline in the number of I/T courses particularly at Level 3 shows little sign of reversal; only one institution (Victoria College) has moved into the field of Graduate Diploma education in a number of languages; there is still only one Level 4 course in one language (Japanese at the University of Queensland) in the whole of the country, while WA, Tasmania, the ACT and Queensland have no Level 3 courses, and the course in South Australia is winding down.

The situation at Level 2 is somewhat better, but only serves to raise further questions about NAATI's testing program. With substantial numbers in a wide range of languages now flowing for a number of years from RMIT, the question of the worth of continued NAATI Level 2 tests in those languages in that State must be again raised. Petersham TAFE in Sydney has had similar success, albeit with a narrower range of languages. Elsewhere even Level 2 courses are under threat, with a shaky existence being enjoyed by courses in WA, NT, Queensland and South Australia. While the recent resurrection of Level 2 courses in the ACT is to be welcomed, the total picture again is far from heartening.

This report has stressed the links between courses and their difficulties in surviving vis a vis the NAATI testing program. This situation is exacerbated by the recent increased tendency to run test preparation courses for NAATI tests, arising from employer concerns over upgrading the accreditation of their interpreters quickly, plus the high failure rates and general lack of understanding of the tests on the part of many candidates. In some cases these cram courses have been run in the same languages as standard I/T courses in the same city, an inexplicable duplication and again a serious tension between I/T courses and testing. However, it is important to understand that, while the testing programs and NAATI's attitude towards

them are important, they are not the crucial factor in the decline of courses or their persistent problems. Indeed, while courses often complain both about the testing program and about other attitudes of NAATI as being detrimental to their work, the causes of problems for courses lie fundamentally elsewhere, both in the external milieu of I/T and within the courses themselves.

The external milieu that determined the vicious circles referred to by Shannon leads to similar vicious circles in the courses themselves: low status of the profession leads to often low quality of candidates with consequent low commitment to professional careers in the field; low profile among academic disciplines leads to low status for I/T academics and low levels of commitment to developing their own career in I/T (eg by doing research and publishing in the area). Internally, institutional constraints continually affect courses adversely. For a start, while the kinds of I/T courses sought are 'pure' I/T courses, that is, not to have I/T as simply an add-on part or only one component of another course of study, in fact the course at University of Western Sydney (Macarthur) has continually had to battle in a school that has put demands on the course being part of a broader stream of study, leaving I/T virtually as a series of options within a wider degree. An inability to expand into new languages also limits this course, where languages are taught in general offerings to all students in the respective school, not to I/T students alone.

In South Australia, the course has not been able to expand beyond the initial languages of Italian and Greek, despite attempts to gain approval for a Graduate Diploma in a wider range of languages. The winding down of the course is also reflective of staff finding career structures elsewhere in their institutional settings more appealing than the quite arduous task of keeping an I/T course afloat. In Victoria, while Victoria College has developed the I/T course with the widest range of languages in Australia, with Graduate Diplomas now complementing the undergraduate degree, and the offering of trade and business languages with the help of external funding, persistent problems of funding formulae and difficulties with student numbers in some languages have dogged the course since its inception.

The outcome of this is that over the years courses have

been running, except for a few languages in a few cities, courses have *not* provided the normal mode of entry for the profession, and they retain a marginal presence in the I/T field. The exceptions are significant: in some of the larger languages, particularly in Victoria and South Australia, there are numbers of good graduates from the courses who continue to supply the profession not only with good practitioners but also, increasingly, with training officers and middle-level managers the field is very short of. But for the vast numbers of languages, courses have not been an avenue for accreditation and professional development. The most significant factor here has been the placing of I/T courses into the structures of broadly arts/social sciences/education faculties, with funding formulae extremely antithetical to the kind of intense skills-building required in the courses. In many languages it has been impossible to justify classes with the low numbers of students to make a tertiary class possible. A major issue here is funding formulae, and despite constant pushing for better funding formulae by the courses and some independent reports (eg Ingleson), I/T courses are still often funded at the same level as other courses around them or other language courses. The current discipline review of languages in tertiary education, while not specifically concerned with I/T, may also have a role to play in this issue.

Other problems in courses relate to the knowledge base and degree of research among I/T course staff. Very simply, there is not a research tradition in this field in Australia, reflecting again the particular nature of I/T and its development in this country. I/T courses at Level 3 developed in Colleges of Advanced Education, well before recent moves for amalgamations and conversion into universities. They commenced with few educators having a background in I/T education: some were practitioners (usually translators), but many were language teachers or academics in other areas, and often safer in those areas than in the relatively new field of I/T education which, like the profession itself, in a very real way had to be 'invented'. There was also no strong research tradition elsewhere - here or overseas - on which they could draw, certainly for the type of interpreting practiced in Australia, and only marginally for the kind of translations generally undertaken here. These academics, with typical CAE teaching loads, had to find the time and resources to construct the field themselves.

The job has hardly begun. There is still a fundamental lack of course materials and principled approaches, particularly in interpreting education.

The other significant lack is that of research. As mentioned, there has never been a strong research tradition in this field, and even overseas research is heavily oriented to translation and simultaneous conference interpreting. Research particularly in interpreting has been slow to evolve, with the most significant step yet the workshops on I/T research held by the Centre for Asian Languages and Studies inaugurated in Brisbane in February 1990. The annual Conference of the Interpreter Translator Educators Association of Australia (CITEAA) has also been held since 1978, and has in recent years drawn more genuine research papers. These ventures however also show the large amount of territory uncovered.

In the inaugural Brisbane workshop on I/T research, more than half the papers dealt with translation issues from by now familiar perspectives of comparative stylistics and translation between languages with very different syntactical structure and very different cultures - material already rather well traversed in the international literature. There were by contrast fewer papers on interpreting in Australia, and it is clear that in this area there is a lack of even the most basic descriptive work upon which to build research efforts. The most promising aspect of the workshop perhaps was its suggested list of issues for future I/T research, a list that shows awareness of just these shortcomings, and demonstrating how many areas of I/T in Australia need work done on them. The list suggested as the most urgent directions in I/T research:

- research on user attitudes to I/T and to interpreters and translators
- research on assessment standards and procedures
- research on cognitive issues in I/T
- research on curriculum development in I/T
- research on the socioeconomics of I/T in the Australian community
- development of datasets for use in research
- comparative language studies as impacting on I/T (Professor Alan Rix; personal communication to workshop participants 1990)

A number of other issues also came up during the workshop which would be of potential research interest: terminology; interdisciplinary studies and I/T; subtitling (SBS); machine translation and patents; semiotics and note-taking; role of current knowledge awareness; non-verbal communication; role of individual disposition in competence; the commercial translation process; use of field trials, and micro studies of I/T difficulties. Some of these issues do from time to time receive attention in CITEAA conferences, and a few elsewhere such as the ALAA Congress, but the lists indicate the enormity of the work ahead. It is not clear that present I/T educators, in present circumstances, can themselves cover many of these issues.

CHAPTER 6

A SUMMARY OF INTERPRETING/ TRANSLATING ISSUES

In the previous chapter we dealt in some depth with the major issues in the I/T field, identifying the forces that shape policy in this area, and outlining some principles of desirable future developments.

6.1. Needs, rights and resources

Placing I/T issues more broadly within language policy development in Australia, the development of I/T reflects more general changes in attitudes and policy towards languages and their place in Australian society. I/T demonstrates, for example, the historic shift in Australia from seeing language issues in terms of *needs*, to identifying language *rights*, to seeing language as a *resource* (Department of Education 1982). The early era of responding to *needs* in an often unplanned way, well described by Martin, has now in the majority of cases been transcended. However, even now within I/T, as in other areas of language policy, there are often inadequacies in terms of identifying and monitoring needs, caused largely by restricted institutional perspectives, little language planning in relation to new population groups or potential markets, and long lead times necessary to train practitioners in languages that may be new in demand.

Moving from needs to rights, the *right* to an interpreter is now increasingly firmly established as a right in the public sector, and provides a good litmus test of the commitment of Australian institutions to the NESB clients they service. While again in this report we have pointed to areas of still inadequate development and commitment in this respect, Australia's achievements in this field have been notable, as exemplified by Blewett's optimistic account of the development of I/T from the late 1970s to the late 1980s:

> "Australia leads the world in the provision of community interpreting and translating services and

> in the regulation and training of interpreters and translators for that provision... in the culturally pluralist but English language dominated Australia of today, equal access to all services frequently for non native English speakers, demands the employment of bilingual professionals or the provision of interpreter/translator services, or both." (Blewett 1987:1)

Blewett goes on to specifically identify new areas of future work (tourism, trade, business) for which I/T will provide a resource. The issue of language as a *resource*, often mentioned in recent language policy documents, refers first of all to the multilingualism brought to Australia in its immigration program. This is seen to be a resource both for language needs within Australia and for external relations: increasingly, the distinctions between 'community languages' and 'trade and business languages' has been breaking down as many languages clearly straddle these two areas: indeed, this distinction has been explicitly buried in recent language policy documents such as DEET's Green Paper (1990).

Identifying language as a resource, however, also raises a number of problematic issues. While it is correct to term languages in Australia as a resource, and this is demonstrated by successful international use of our linguistic resources (eg the Fujitsu translation example, cited in Chapter 4), we can now see more clearly both the opportunities and the constraints that attend this resource. Yes, multilingualism is a valuable resource but, from an I/T perspective, only under certain conditions: speaking a LOTE is valuable for I/T only if the language is developed to a high enough level, and only if it is accompanied by an adequate level of English, and finally only if the considerable resources to train practitioners are also devoted to this purpose (training them not in languages, but in I/T technique). With increasing graduate immigration to Australia, some of the above conditions are beginning to be better met than in the past, when often practitioners were those with very poor educational levels in any language.

One notable issue that arises here however is precisely the dependence of the field upon immigrants for its practitioners: very few native speakers of English are ever able to develop

their skills in another language to a level where they can undertake I/T. While this is not entirely an Australian phenomenon (interpreters in many instances around the world will come from linguistic minority groups) it does reflect the relatively low level of language learning obtaining at present in Australia. Only NESB individuals, whether born in Australia or born overseas, can usually develop their bilingualism to a point where they can contemplate becoming I/T practitioners. If this situation continues, then interpreters and translators' status will continue to be affected not only by their own levels of competence and professionalism, but also more or less strongly by the general status of minority groups within the country.

6.2. Policy development in language services

Moving from wider language policy and language resource issues, to the development of I/T services in Australia, it is notable that very few of the perspectives that have affected language policy more generally are at all apparent in the exceedingly institution-oriented discussions of language services, the endless round of reform and rationalization that has plagued this relatively tiny area of service provision. The first notable aspect of current debates over language services is the extremely restricted nature of these debates.

Just as the field of I/T has recently been repeatedly absent or underplayed in significant language policy reports, structures and initiatives, so too there has been no presence of language policy bodies in the ongoing and heightening debates over structures and principles in I/T field. At present, such (mutual) lack of connection between these two areas of language policy is detrimental to both. One of the consequences is that, unlike some other significant language policy areas, there is extremely limited participation in debate on I/T policy. Indeed, such debate is entirely dominated by language service providers in their bureaucratic institutions, a few practitioners, and perhaps NAATI. There is no wider involvement in policy debates, apart from very occasional mobilization on specific issues. The present state of documentation, and of policy debate in I/T reflect this situation: reviews of services (which seem never-ending) make

dry reading, heavily constrained by what they can say about their own services, and often evasive or ignorant about other services. Perspectives occasionally provided by consultants, for purposes of legitimation rather than knowledge, do little more than cast justification of organizational perspectives in managerial form (while often not being given the resources, or political leeway, to understand interpreting issues more thoroughly). There is little policy-oriented writing from independent authors with an understanding of I/T issues. Few reports are read by anyone other than those directly affected.

This situation in I/T can be compared to the widely based policy debate that can be heard on other significant language policy issues, for example multilingual broadcasting, where many parties can participate even if not directly involved in such broadcasting; or, at another level, ESL teaching, which again attracts widespread involvement in policy debate, on more than financial or management issues. Both these areas have a lively and well-informed constituency.

As outlined earlier, since the Senate Committee report, there has been no such community of interest apparent for I/T, which means that outside influences, say primarily concerned with *language* issues (or any other kind of issue) are effectively excluded from policy processes. Talking to language service officers, or profession leaders in I/T, there was no feeling that anyone else immediately outside the field had any interest in the field, or that their own actions in any way could be scrutinized by outsiders. There was no sense, for example, that someone could ask linguistic questions relevant to an I/T bureaucrat, or make a research contribution to practice, or make soundly based suggestions on present practice.

The restricted nature of these debates means that issues within language services remained entirely contained within bureaucratic settings. One example of this is in the Peat Marwick report, where part of the consultants' methodology was to circulate a discussion paper on language service organization and possible options for reorganization. The report noted that none of the State I/T services found themselves able to comment on the models, or indeed make any reaction at all to the paper, except to talk about their own services and the need to work out federal/State financial matters. While mindful of federalism

issues and the battles over these as outlined in the previous chapter, it is of considerable concern if indeed certain language services can talk of nothing except their own services: even if they did not want to specifically comment on the options paper, it is alarming if they in fact cannot speak more generally about needs and resources in the field of I/T, desirable developments, problems faced by their practitioners (which in almost all cases are problems faced in common) and, generally, make an input into reflecting upon and identifying issues within I/T. The problem here is, in the end, not institutional but intellectual and professional, or rather, where institutional loyalties seem to make it impossible for service providers to talk about the real issues (quality, provision, professionalism, resources) that must be addressed. In the end, these service providers lose their intellectual and professional capacities to identify common issues and desirable courses of development.

It must be said, finally, that although the Peat Marwick report identified this shortcoming of State language services, it was not a shortcoming of them alone. Elsewhere in this report we have referred to the limits of perspective of the Peat Marwick report itself; certainly federal institutions and their representatives seem as unfamiliar with issues as the States, and equally institutionally bound.

The previous chapter has outlined the pressing issues in reorganizing language services and the principles that should guide their development. At the moment, language services still tend to be prisoners of their past and their particular institutional setting. While many of them are indeed extremely innovatory, and face issues such as training, service provision, corporate image, sharing of resources etc with often considerable inventiveness, there seems to be an almost wilful ignorance and avoidance of knowledge about what other services are doing or that what they are doing may be of any relevance. Usually the only points ever mentioned about other agencies (certainly to this report) were those cryptically critical - if not entirely evasive - of other services. To repeat, this is an intellectual and professional failing, particularly where it is I/T practitioners themselves who are now language service managers - it would be difficult to imagine, for example, that any service provider in the area of medicine could not, as well as making institutional

points, also be capable of making very general professional input into what must be an adequate level or quality of service, what must be access issues or training issues or cooperative issues faced in this and so on.

This means that for language services it will be extremely difficult to make the transition identified by Shannon of moving from looking at *migrant* needs to looking at the *language* needs of Australia, given the way that language services have grown up in the shadow of a variety of immigration and ethnic affairs oriented institutions. Any new focus here will have to be on issues of quality as well as access, professionalism as well as provision, linguistic and specifically I/T criteria of performance rather than institutional ones. How intellectual and professional perspectives can be enhanced, and how the NLIA may play a part in this, is discussed at the end of this chapter.

6.3. Wider policy debates - NAATI, courses, the profession, standards

The previous section drew attention to the lack of wider involvement in policy debate on I/T issues, as exemplified by the narrowly conceived debates over language services. Significantly, there is a similar need for fresh and broader perspectives on all other issues in I/T already identified; in short, to bring I/T within the mainstream of language policy.

Just as language services are little examined by outside interests in language, so too NAATI tends to be a body unto itself, influenced only indirectly by practitioners, users or other interested parties. This report has identified a number of issues that must be taken up with NAATI - its system of levels and their contemporary relevance, and related issues of standards, must be the most important ones. Others include the appropriateness of NAATI testing at the non-interpreting levels (Level 1 and, it is argued, increasingly Level 2). It can be expected that NAATI may be uneasy on this question given the NLIA now boasts a Language Testing Unit, but again a language policy perspective may be of help: if the NLIA centre is indeed a language testing centre, then it will have no brief to test I/T; the corollary of this is, of course, that if NAATI is indeed primarily concerned with I/T, it will not have as a priority

testing for language aide work. These issues could be usefully discussed by a broader audience than merely the NLIA and NAATI.

The particular fate of courses has been extensively covered in previous chapters, and the parlous state of many courses indicates some crucial interventions in higher eduction generally may be necessary. There has been no overall analysis of needs in I/T training in recent years, and NAATI plans for the distribution of courses are dated and have been overtaken by events (NAATI 1986). Needs analysis, carried out by a body familiar with I/T education issues, seems overdue; compared to the endless reviews and inquiries in other parts of I/T, courses have been characterized more by neglect from policy makers. There is particular need to look at Level 3 training in all States of significant need and demand, and to take on the issue of training for the rarer languages, either those not tested at all by NAATI, or those which are unlikely to supply sufficient numbers of candidates for normal tertiary classes. Similar issues of training have been looked at in other areas of language education.

It is important to constantly keep in mind the small size and therefore relative expensiveness of I/T training, compared to mainstream language teaching. Mindful of the previous comments on multilingualism being a resource only if language is developed to particular levels, and LOTE ability is matched by English ability, the number of potential candidates of sufficient quality for I/T courses is likely to remain small, and this situation is only exacerbated by uncertainty of career opportunities after such courses.This becomes an issue when, with the increasing emphasis now on Level 3 by employers and by registration, there will be some Level 2 practitioners who will not have the capacity to accredit at Level 3, even if they have access to courses. At Level 4, the dearth of candidates will be even more critical, and it is likely that Level 4 courses will attract very small classes, putting considerable pressure on institutional resources. Certainly also, for the future, either at Level 3 or 4, Australia is unlikely to be able to follow overseas patterns of conference interpreter training where students will normally work with at least three languages; Australian patterns are likely to remain solidly working into and out of an A and B language.

Finally in relation to courses, it needs to be noted that while I/T courses are important to examine and their continued viability is a crucial question for I/T, equally crucial is the issue of training for the *users* of I/T: elements of understanding of cultural differences and response to these are now at least on paper part of many professional training courses, ranging over the spectrum of law, medicine, paramedical and welfare courses. Few of them however have been able to initiate - or, where initiated, maintain - effective elements on working with interpreters in these courses. Significantly also, reflecting other conditions in this field already outlined, there has been little such training for other professions particularly to do with business, trade and related areas. There needs to be a place for training for effective use of I/T in any occupation trained for regular contact with NESB clients - whether here or overseas. This needs to become part of other innovations in language and cultural programs in the professions and elsewhere.

The last chapter noted the signal lack of understanding of I/T even in the top echelons of government whose function is inter alia, international relations. The gaucheness of Australian responses to the need for international communication has long been commented on, and marks an important element of contemporary language policy perspectives: in looking at I/T as a resource, this area is still alarmingly underdeveloped. It seems paradoxical that in the field of welfare or immigration we are willing to look at I/T needs, are willing to impose standards upon practitioners, are willing to argue over language services, are willing even to contemplate that potential professionals must learn about cultural differences, but nothing like those demands are made either upon the politicians and departmental heads that represent us internationally, or their protocol officers or advisers. Just as there is a need to develop the top of the I/T profession, so there is a need for significant education directed at those echelons of government who on other occasions talk most effusively about our international commitments and opportunities. This represents a particular challenge for those involved in I/T or other aspects of language policy; success in this area may mark the true coming of age of the I/T profession and of I/T provision in Australia, its assumption of a place not for the exotic and the disadvantaged but for the normal operations

of our government and country as an effective trader and a good citizen of the world. These are issues of national scope.

6.2 Recommendations to the NLIA

6.2.1 Self-education on interpreting/translating issues

For the NLIA to be able, through any of its centres or activities, to make contributions to I/T, there must first be a considerable self-education program, to enable those in NLIA and related bodies to have something to say about this area. As outlined earlier, there is a tendency to assume that one is a 'natural' expert of translation if one deals with other languages or perhaps with specific issues in linguistics; it is the hope of this report that any such presumption of expertise would not be assumed lightly - being a linguist, or being multilingual, is not of itself a guarantee of I/T expertise.

Recommendations are made here to promote I/T as an issue for the NLIA for its own self-education, through publications and possible conferences and workshops and other avenues.

Recommendation 1: That this report be circulated widely by the NLIA to facilitate discussion of interpreting/translating issues.

Recommendation 2: (Recommendation also to AACLAME) That I/T issues and needs be publicised in NLIA and AACLAME publications, and contributions from the I/T field to these publications be actively sought. In turn, NLIA and AACLAME and related bodies should seek to publicize their functions and work to I/T bodies through I/T publications.

Recommendation 3: That the NLIA and its constituent centres establish contact with the major I/T forums and bodies (NAATI, CITEAA, AUSIT) to explore issues of mutual interest.

Recommendation 4: That in the medium term, the NLIA hold a major conference on I/T policy and its place in wider language policy, drawing on the contacts, research and publications mentioned elsewhere in these recommendations.

6.4. Who participates in I/T policy debate?

As outlined earlier, it is of considerable concern that there is such restricted participation in debates on I/T, certainly compared to other areas of language policy. There is an urgent need to get perspectives into I/T policy that are at the moment absent - for NLIA and related bodies, this would obviously be a linguistic perspective, but more broadly a *language policy* perspective, tying I/T into other significant developments in language policy. Recommendations to NLIA and AACLAME here attempt to have these bodies declare their interest in I/T policy.

Recommendation 5: (Recommendation to AACLAME) That AACLAME's Language Services Reference Group membership and activities include interpreting/ translating interests and issues.

Recommendation 6: (Recommendation to AACLAME/NLIA) That AACLAME or relevant sections of NLIA ask to be able to comment on major policy decisions in the field of I/T at Commonwealth level, and where relevant at State levels.

6.5. Professional linguistic and research needs

At several points in earlier discussion, reference has been made to possible NLIA involvement in areas of I/T that make direct use of professional linguistic expertise. Given previous comments about the need for NLIA to develop expertise in I/T, there are several areas where parts of NLIA could usefully collaboratively work with I/T interests.

The area of testing is an obvious one for NLIA interest. Some of the larger questions raised in this report in relation to testing include the proper place of testing at the various levels, the question of the appropriateness of the levels themselves, and the question of how the distinctly interpreting aspects of testing need to be distinguished from other purposes of these tests (eg to test bilingual officer capacity). Some of these issues

are perhaps too large to be taken on immediately, but two areas of testing in particular may benefit from NLIA interest: looking at issues in Levels 1 and 2 testing, and exploring the potential to assist the development and marketing of NAATI tests overseas. More generally, the links between the Language Testing Unit and bodies in I/T need to be developed.

Other areas of potential professional involvement relate to research and courses: longer-term issues could include the appropriate institutional arrangements for I/T courses (particularly at Levels 3 and 4), and the mounting of significant research programs in I/T, particularly on hitherto unresearched aspects of interpreting. More immediately, there could be closer involvement of NLIA in initial research needs in the area, through involvement in such activities as I/T research workshops and CITEAA, and publicizing I/T research needs through publications and other forums. In relation to courses, on a specific point of funding, there needs to be a study of the necessary funding formula for viable I/T courses in higher education.

Recommendation 7: (In collaboration with NAATI) That there be an examination in a rigorous linguistic fashion of the nature and uses of Levels 1 and 2 tests, investigating their appropriateness for being linked to interpreting levels, and recommending on testing possibilities to better reflect the intended purposes of these tests.

Recommendation 8: (In collaboration with NAATI) That there be an exploration of how to best enhance NAATI's capacity to develop and market its tests overseas, taking NAATI's export of tests to New Zealand as a starting point, with the possible future development of a substantial testing instrument designed in Australia for I/T needs, or, depending upon context, bilingual officer needs.

Recommendation 9: That the links between the Language Testing Unit and I/T bodies such as NAATI, language services and courses be strengthened.

Recommendation 10: That the NLIA and, where appropriate, AACLAME publicize I/T research needs through publications and other forums.

Recommendation 11: That, to the extent this is not achieved in the Review of Modern Language Teaching in Higher Education, there be a review of appropriate funding formulae for I/T courses at Levels 3 and 4 in higher education, such work to be carried out with the collaboration of relevant higher education funding bodies.

Recommendation 12: That institutional arrangements for specialist I/T courses at Levels 3 and 4 be carefully considered in any future discussions of key centres, research centres or other institutional arrangements for languages or related disciplines, in which the NLIA is involved.

6.6. Practical help of the NLIA to I/T bodies

Outside of the professional links indicated in the recommendations above, there is also some quite practical help the NLIA can give to I/T bodies, successful examples of which are already to hand, so that recommendations here are unnecessary. The most significant is that AUSIT has attained some office accommodation and other infrastructure support from the NLIA in Melbourne, as part of the NLIA's intention to "offer a base in which to house the secretariat of national language associations" (AACLAME 1990:21).

6.7. Selling the model of Australian interpreting/translating overseas

Australia's National Policy on Languages and other language policy initiatives have long commanded attention internationally, and it is important that the significant innovations in Australian I/T be counted among some of the unique contributions of Australian language policy. It is still remarkable that such a convenient and relatively inexpensive innovation as the Telephone Interpreter Service is not a standard facility in Vienna or Berlin, in Toronto or New York, in Singapore or Bangkok, or indeed in any markedly multilingual city, or city

with numbers of foreign visitors or busy overseas trade connections. European and American attempts to introduce a more community-oriented interpreting perspective could well benefit from views of accreditation and training and both general and specialist services developed in Australia, and we may have something to give also to trade and business-oriented interpreting as our training programs, and both private and government initiatives in this direction, gather momentum. One important perspective that was developed in language policy debate in Australia over the past decade was the evolution of thinking of language seen as a need into language seen as a right into language seen as a resource. In I/T, issues of both needs and rights are very much to the fore and mark the achievement of this field in Australia in taking seriously language services in institutional contexts. From present perspectives, however, the particular model of I/T developed in Australia, whatever vicissitudes of bureaucratic and financial policy constrictions, is also a resource, a worthy model to put before the world.

Recommendation 13: That NLIA in any general publicity used in Australia or overseas, in outlining particular contributions or innovations in language policy in Australia, include reference to significant initiatives in I/T, the principles upon which I/T services and functions have been established, and the potential resource of the I/T model as developed in Australia

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APPENDIX 1.

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED FOR THIS REPORT

Maurice Aliprandi	Associated Translators and Linguists, Sydney.
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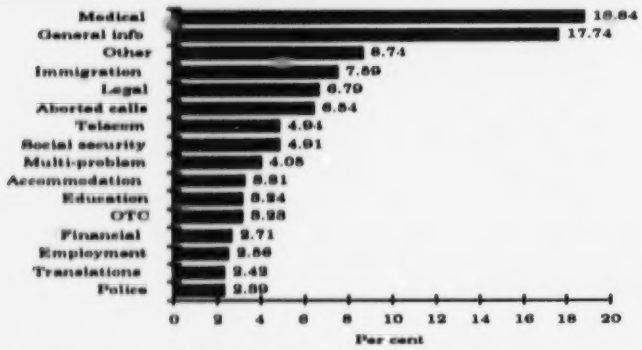
Angela Manson	Health Care Interpreter Service, Sydney
Christine Pearce	OIC TIS, Sydney
Jean Shannon and Laurie Westcott,	Language Services Task Force, DILGEA Canberra
Barry Turner	Director of Language Services, DILGEA Preston

Thanks also to numerous colleagues and practitioners in the field who have discussed issues related to this report, particularly in forums provided by the Conferences of the Interpreter Translator Educators Association of Australia (CITEAA), and the ongoing interactions with the field in the conduct of I/T courses at Victoria College.

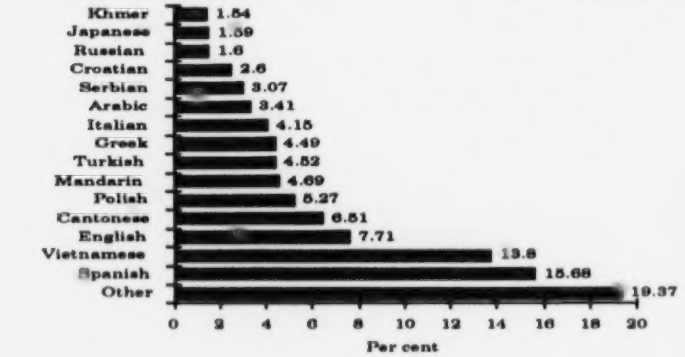
APPENDIX 2

THE TELEPHONE INTERPRETER SERVICE, 1989/90

SUBJECT OF CALLS



MAIN LANGUAGES USED



Total calls received: 362,235
Source DILGEA Annual Review to June 1990: pp. 76-7.

APPENDIX 3

Range of languages used in the Telephone Interpreter Service: sample from 6 month operation of Melbourne TIS.

Language	Count	Percent	Language	Count	Percent
Vietnamese	14,226	19.07	Tamil	37	0.05
Spanish	11,291	15.14	Urdu	36	0.05
English	5,842	7.83	Malay	36	0.05
Turkish	5,229	7.01	Tongan	31	0.04
Polish	4,431	5.94	Dutch	30	0.04
Greek	4,189	5.62	Finnish	28	0.04
Unknown calls	4,112	5.51	Somali	28	0.04
Italian	3,718	4.99	Tetum	24	0.03
Cantonese	3,632	4.87	Danish	19	0.03
Serbian	2,922	3.92	Other	21	0.03
Arabic	1,825	2.45	Assyrian	18	0.02
Croatian	1,523	2.04	Swedish	15	0.02
Mandarin	1,456	1.95	Samoan	15	0.02
Hungarian	1,247	1.67	Armenian	12	0.02
Macedonian	1,126	1.51	Sinhalese	11	0.02
Khmer	1,006	1.35	Other Chinese	11	0.02
Portuguese	853	1.14	Latvian	10	0.01
Russian	828	1.11	Lithuanian	10	0.01
Romanian	684	0.92	Amharic	9	0.01
Japanese	651	0.87	Other Indian/ Pakistani	9	0.01
Persian	486	0.65	Estonian	8	0.01
French	342	0.46	Norwegian	8	0.01
Lao	334	0.45	Burmese	7	0.01
German	260	0.35	Slovene	6	0.01
Thai	246	0.33	Fijian	3	0.00
Hakka	221	0.30	Hmong	3	0.00
Czech	206	0.28	Icelandic	2	0.00
Korean	197	0.26	Oromo	2	0.00
Teo Chiew	166	0.22	Dari	2	0.00
Maltese	145	0.19	Bengali	2	0.00
Indonesian	128	0.17	Tigrigna	2	0.00
Tagalog	95	0.13	Yiddish	1	0.00
Albanian	92	0.12	Afrikaans	1	0.00
Afghani	85	0.11	Slovak	1	0.00
Hindu	68	0.09	Malayalam	1	0.00
Punjabi	63	0.08	Asante	1	0.00
Bulgarian	57	0.08	Sindhi	1	0.00
Hokkien	54	0.07	Mauritian Creole	1	0.00
Ukranian	44	0.06			
Hebrew	41	0.06			

APPENDIX 4

INTERPRETING/TRANSLATING AND LANGUAGE AIDE COURSE APPROVED BY NAATI AS AT JUNE 1989

Notes

1. NAATI approval is normally given for 5 years, and in the majority of cases is renewed following the due re-accreditation processes. Courses amd language streams for which NAATI approval has lapsed are marked *. In some cases approval/reapproval may be conditional. Additional language streams offered during the 5-year term must also have NAATI approval.
2. Accreditation of successful students is subject to the recommendation of the institution concerned.
3. Further current information on the courses listed, including the languages offered, may be obtained from the institutions concerned.

Institution	Category & Level	Languages	Term of NAATI Approval
1. AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY			
*Canberra CAE	Int/trans 3	Spanish	1975-1980
		Italian	1975-1978
ACT Instit. of Tafe	Int/Trans 2	Italian,Spanish Mandarin,Greek	1988-1992
2. NEW SOUTH WALES			
Sydney TAFE	Int 2	Polish	1983-1989
		*Macedonian	1983-1984
		*Arabic,Greek, Italian Serbian/Croatian, Spanish, Turkish	1978-1984

Petersham TAFE	Int	2	Cantonese	1985-1989
			Vietnamese	1983-1989
			Mandarin,Khmer	1989
	Language Aide	1	Cantonese, Mandarin Vietnamese,Arabic Khmer, Korean, Spanish	1987-1991
University of Wollongong	Int/Trans	2	Italian	1983-1992
Macarthur Institute of Higher Education	*Int/Trans (Associate Diploma)	2	Arabic,German Italian, Spanish, Turkish	1982-1988
			Vietnamese	1983-1988
	Int/Trans (B.A.)	3	Arabic, German Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese	1985-1988
Newcastle TAFE	Int	2	Serbian/Croatian	1980-1984
				1986-1989
			Polish	1983-1984
				1986-1989
			*Greek, Italian, Spanish	1980-1984
			*Vietnamese	
			*Macedonian	1983-1984
Burwood Girls' High School	Language Aide	1	Cantonese, Greek,Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese	1986-1990

3. NORTHERN TERRITORY

Adult Migrant Education	Language Aide	1	Polish, Vietnamese, Hakka, Spanish, Portuguese,	1986-1990
			Malay	1988-1990
			Tagalog, German Cantonese	

Casuarina Secondary College	Language Aide	1	Greek, Italian Mandarin German, Spanish Indonesian, Vietnamese	1979-1988 1980-1988
Darwin Instituteof Technology (previously Darwin Community College)	Int/Trans	2	Greek Mandarin Portuguese Vietnamese	1984-1989 1986-1989 1987-1989 1985-1989
School of Aust. Linguistics	Int/Trans	2	Nominated Aboriginal Languages	1980-1989
Darwin Institute of Technology	Language Aide	1	Nominated Aboriginal Languages	1986-1990
Institute for Aboriginal Development	Language Aide (in 50 hours)	1	Arandic, Ngarrka Western Desert Groups	1980-1991
	Int (in 200 hours)	2	Waramungu Groups	1982-1991

4. QUEENSLAND

University of Queensland	*Trans (Japanese into English only) Interpreter both directions	3	Japanese	1980-1984
	Trans (Japanese into English only) Interpreter (both directions)	4	Japanese	1985-1989
South Brisbane College of TAFE	Int/Trans	2	Spanish Vietnamese	1988-1992

5. SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide College of TAFE	Int	2	Greek, Serbian/ Croatian	1980-1992
			Italian	
			Spanish	1981-1982
				1986-1992
			Polish, Vietnamese	1983-1992
			Khmer	1985-1992
			Mandarin	1987-1992
			Farsi	1988-1992
S.A.C.A.E.	Int/Trans (Associate Diploma Int/Trans)	2	Greek, Italian Polish, Serbian/ Croatian, Vietnamese	1979-1991
	(B.A.)	3		
	PG 1 (Int or Trans)	3	Vietnamese Serbian/Croatian, Polish, Greek, Italian, Japanese Cantonese/Mandarin, Indonesian/Malay, Spanish, German French	1987-1991
*West Lakes High School	Language Aide	1	Serbian/ Croatian Russian	1983-1985

6. VICTORIA

RMIT Technical College (TAFE)	Int/Trans	2	Turkish, Spanish Vietnamese	1980-1992
			Polish	1983-1992
			Cantonese	1985-1992
			Khmer, Macedonian	1986-1992
			Arabic	1980-1981
				1987-1992
			Lao, Mandarin	1988-1992

			Japanese	1987-1992
			Nominated "Minority" Languages	1987
			Country Interpreters Stream (Italian, Turkish, Greek)	1987-1992
*RMIT CAE (1978-1982)	Int/Trans	3	Greek	1975-1982
			Serbian/Croatian	
*RMIT Technical College (1975-1978)			Italian	1978-1982
Victoria College, Toorak	Int/Trans	3	Greek, Italian, Turkish	1981-1990
			Serbian/Croatian	
	Int/Trans (Post-graduate)	3	Mandarin, Japanese	1988-1992
			Arabic, Spanish	
			Vietnamese	

7. WESTERN AUSTRALIA

W.A.C.A.E.	Int/Trans (B.A.)	3	Italian, German	1982-1988
			Vietnamese	1986-1988
			Portuguese	
	Int or Trans (Postgrad.)	3	German (trans)	1986-1990
			Mandarin (trans)	1986-1990
			German (int)	
			Mandarin (int)	
Perth Technical College	Int	2	Polish	1982-1988
			Vietnamese	1983-1988
			Portuguese, Greek	1984-1988
			German, Cantonese	1982-1984
			French	1983-1984
			Croatian	1981-1982
			Spanish, Italian	1986-1988

Trans	2	French, Polish	1984-1988
		Spanish, Italian	
		Vietnamese	
		German,	
		Portuguese	1986-1988
		Greek	1987-1983
		Japanese	1987

Note: These are courses accredited by NAATI. Actual offerings by institutions are sometimes volatile, as described in the body of this report.

Source: NAATI Annual Report 1988-9.

AMENDMENT

Page 103, lines 20-26

for "...the course at University of Western Sydney (Macarthur) has continually... not to I/T students alone"

read "...the course at University of Western Sydney (Macarthur) has continually had to battle with both NAATI and its own institutional imperatives to maintain a proper professional I/T basis to the course, in particular, clearly distinguishing these I/T concerns from those of general language courses."

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